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[PRICE ONE PENNY]



[A VITAL QUESTION.]

A TERRIBLE TRIAL;

OR,

FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT.

CHAPTER I.

The cold in clime are cold in blood,
Their love can scarce deserve the name,
But mine was like the lava flood
That boils in Etna's breast of flame.

An elegant boudoir, furnished with black walnut and crimson; the walls softly tinted with a warm pink, and the carpet with just enough blue among its many hues to make a pretty contrast, a charming effect.

Before the pier-glass stood a woman of medium height, whose form, full yet delicately outlined, was the realization of symmetry, whose every movement was the embodiment of grace. Her face was more than beautiful in its soft blending of white and carmine; her eyes, of a deep azure, large and lustrous, carried magic in their glance; and her finely cut lips, red as the ruby, seemed fitting portals to the even, pearly teeth.

Pushing the golden threads of her luxuriant hair from her brow, she turned away from the mirror and sank into a chair.

"Twenty-seven years old this day," she murmured, reflectively. "And yet my youth lingers. Oswald said yesterday that I did not look over twenty-two. He will come soon—he whom I love with all my soul! Oh, if I only knew! But he will love me—he must—he shall—for I worship him! Sometimes I wonder how it is that I retain my youthful looks so well. It seems almost like the eastern tale I read not long ago. But he is not like the Lady Marion's lover who asked to kiss her hand on the balcony. He was old and venerable, and there could not have been on her part the love I feel. But she had retained her youth as I have. The years had left no marks upon

her fair face. But he will come soon, and what woman may do to win him I will do."

"Mamma, mamma!" sounded a sweet, childish voice from the entry.

Leonie Milton, though imbued with a new and deep love, forgot not her child. She listened a moment expectantly, eagerly, her eyes shining softly the while, and a serene, peaceful expression gradually stealing over her face.

"Mamma, let me come in, please! old nurse is naughty!"

"My sweet baby!" exclaimed Leonie, clasping her hands and gazing towards the door as if she already beheld the child. My little treasure—how much she loves her mother!

"Es, I do!" echoed from without, in a tone of delight. "But I want to come in I—does!"

The mother turned the key, the door flew open, and a little fairy in white, with azure eyes and long golden hair, jumped into Leonie's arms and nestled her face on her neck. Closely Leonie held the child, forgetful of that which every woman is supposed to think of first—her toilet. A series of embraces, a succession of gratified shouts, much endearment, and then Leonie stood little Floss on her feet.

"You've been away all day, mamma," said Floss, pouting her cherry lips; "and I've been annoyed 'cause Sarah wouldn't let me dress my new doll in blue, and I don't think she knows much about it, and my mamma'll let me do it, won't she?"

"Yes, dear; but you must not be naughty to Sarah, because she does just as I tell her to."

"Did you tell her to put my red box on the high shelf, so that I couldn't get it?"

"No," said Leonie, wondering what was coming. "Then she don't do just as you tell her, mamma, does she?" queried Floss, arching her pretty brows.

"Not always perhaps," answered the mother, with difficulty repressing a smile. "Neither do you, Flossy."

"Me tries to, though, and I'll tell Sarah to try, 'cause I think she'd better."

"What a darling little tyrannist she is!" exclaimed

Leonie, catching the child in her arms and rapturously kissing her.

"I loves you, mamma, and you've got some almonds in your pocket, haven't you?" And she shook her head and looked askance at Leonie with those lustrous eyes. The child was but the mother in miniature.

Ere Leonie could speak a knock sounded on the door, and Mina, the maid, entered.

"Well?" said Leonie, thoughts of her lover returning to her mind.

"Mr. Loring is in the drawing-room," answered Mina, courteously.

"You must go with Mina, Floss," said Leonie, putting the child down and smoothing her collar. "And if you are good I will send for you by-and-bye. Now kiss me and run."

Uncomplainingly Floss submitted to her banishment, and the mother was again alone. He had come. The thought sent a light of gladness to her eyes and a warm, gratified flush to each cheek. Her hands trembled as she clasped the bracelets over her delicate wrists, and her very being seemed enthralled by some magic influence.

The excitement only increased her beauty, however, and when she entered the drawing-room with that gliding step so peculiarly her own, and extended her hand to Oswald Loring, he felt that her equal was not to be found. How her eyes danced and sparkled, what a glow of animation wreathed her features when she smiled, and how gently her bosom rose and fell beneath its silken covering!

He turned partially away, as if the fascination was distasteful to him. She noted the movement, and for an instant her face lost its light in a shade of apprehension. He had never said "Leonie, I love you," but his every act had breathed tenderness and respect, and at times his enthusiasm had led him to use endearing words.

All this would admit but one construction, and her woman's heart had long taught her to believe that he loved her. That she idolized him was evident, and that there was a certain intensity to her love which



approximated to her own as was clearly apparent. She was amiable, kind, charitable and generous; she was also jealous, persistent and passionate. And Oswald Loring, standing there with one arm resting on the mantel, and his white face, with its dark, deep eyes looking down upon her, thought only of the latter attributes, and failed to give her noble nature due credit. He regarded her superficially, he admired her beauty of feature and figure and taste in dress, but cared little for her earnest, womanly self. In fact, he considered her vain, high-strung and shallow.

"Oswald, you are sad," she said, half-interrogatively.

"No, Leo—I was thinking of you," he answered, pushing his fingers through his dark-brown hair and smiling tenderly.

"And what of me, pray?" she queried, as she sank into a seat, though a fond expectancy filled her heart.

"I was wondering if you loved your husband when he was alive," he said, with irritating quietness.

She bit her lip with vexation, and her face became a trifle whiter, but she composedly replied.

"I feel that you do not intend to be insolent, and I will reply: I honoured my husband; I did my best to make him happy, and I love his child with all my soul!"

"With all your soul, Leo?" he murmured, coming forward and bending those bright eyes of his gleamingly upon her.

Her neck and face became a lurid crimson, and she did not speak nor look at him.

"Not all? Oh Leo, not all? I had hoped that a little was left for me—that you would love me!" He paused abruptly, took one of her hands within his own and soothed it fondly.

She drew a long breath and gazed upon him dreamily. Then she rose to her feet and passed her hands across her brow. She did not realize the joy which was always associated to her mind with this moment. There was something wanting—some vital principle seemed absent. "Was it love?" She compressed her lips and regarded him searchingly.

"Do you love me, Oswald Loring? On your honour as a man, do you love me?" she suddenly queried, in a low, ominous voice.

He hesitated, passed his hand nervously over his mouth, and then looked up reproachfully.

"You talk very strangely, Leo. I cannot understand this."

"Say yes or no, once and for ever!"

Her eyes flashed a dull, forbidding fire as she spoke, and her fingers interlocked.

"Leo, my own, you must be ill!" she exclaimed, anxiously. "You cannot mean to ask me if I love you. I—why, darling, it is so singular. I need not tell you that my heart is all yours, that you are dearer to me than any one else on earth, and that when you look at me as you do now I am sad and filled with painful wonder. I do not intend to make a speech, Leo. I hate it in the domestic circle; but I must reply to you, and words are my only agents. Leo, dear Leo, did you distrust me? Was that your motive?" And he placed his arm around her waist, and drew her forward until her head rested upon his shoulder.

She remained there a moment as a child who is weary nestles on a protecting breast, and then she slowly lifted her head and sighed. He gazed upon her inquiringly, and imprinted a kiss upon her brow. There was much of that tenderness in the act which women loves, and her heart smote her.

"Leo, you have not answered me. Have you no regard for my friends? Do you not believe me when I tell you I love you?" His voice was deep, earnest and melodious.

She raised her eyes to his face, and the emotion she had missed now came, bringing with it an ecstatic delight; but whether it sprang from the wish for his love, or the sincerity of her own, she could not determine—she did not care. She loved him so fondly, so wildly, that his words seemed the very spirit of truth, and before its purity her doubts became hideous. She raised her hand and gently smoothed his brow.

"Yes, Oswald, I believe you. Nothing could make me more miserable than to doubt you."

"And you love me, dearest?" he queried, softly, drawing her closer to him.

"Need you ask that I love you? Can you not see it in my every look, my every motion? Alas! how little is know of woman's heart. Love you! I give you the best and purest feelings of my nature." She paused—her eyes dilated and shone brightly.

"But should I find that another held a place in your affections, I believe I would kill her and you too!"

"Hush, my darling!"

"I would—I could not bear it. I love you so much, my being is so bound up in yourself that the mere

thought maddens me. Oh, Oswald, I hope you will always love and cherish me. If you do, we shall have a sweet, sweet home. If you don't—But why do I talk so? Pardon me; I've been thinking of impossible things, and I have made you sad too. And yet I would have you remember what I've said."

"Is there one of your words that I forget? Ah, Leo, I fear you do not trust me fully."

His voice quivered as he uttered the last words, but not from emotion. He had seen the door open and a young girl enter, and, although he tried to control his face it expressed more than curiosity.

Leonla wondered, then followed his glance and beheld her seamstress.

Once more she gazed upon him, and there was a blaze as of fire in her eyes. Her jealousy was aroused.

"I hope you'll excuse me, madam," said the girl, in a soft, sweet voice, "but the servant said you were alone, and as you did not hear my knock I supposed you were."

"It's of no consequence," replied Leonla, watching Oswald covertly. "You may leave the parcel here. How much do I owe you?"

The maiden appeared not to hear her, but stood gazing toward Oswald, her large black eyes full of painful wonder. Leonla spoke again sharply. The girl started, blushed, dropped her eyes and stammered:

"Twenty-five shillings, if you please."

Leonla was now trembling with passion. She gave the required amount to the seamstress, waved her hand imperiously, and awaited with burning impatience her departure.

The instant the door was closed she darted toward Oswald, placed one hand on his shoulder and ejaculated:

"She knew you—she was confused, so were you! What does it mean? Speak—speak quick! I am suffering! I shall go mad!"

"My dear Leo, calm yourself. Is it at all strange that I am acquainted with her? Do I not meet many people in a business way? Why, my darling, we shall never be happy if your jealousy is to excite you thus, and without the least cause. I am astonished, Leo, and likewise grieved."

"You excite me—you offer only generalities. Answer me—do you love her?"

Her face was white, her small fingers pinched his shoulder, so intense was her feeling.

An expression of acute sorrow shaded his features for an instant, and then he answered, fervently:

"No, I only love you. Oh, Leo, you torture me with these doubts—you must have confidence in me. Why, every hour of our life would afford as strong a pretext for you to suspect."

"But she loves you? I saw it—I read it in her face," gasped Leonla, still quivering with agitation.

"Allowing your words to be true, am I to blame for that?"

"Yes, if you smiled upon her as you have upon me—if you used your voice, your eyes and your talents to make yourself lovable and beautiful to her, as you have to me."

"Be patient, dearest. I never spoke a dozen words with her at one time in my life. I first saw her in the country a year ago, and I was thrown a little in her society. I have not seen her since, until this hour. Isn't that enough?"

"I cannot doubt you; but, oh, if you could know the tumult in my mind, when I saw her embarrassment, the terrible feelings that swept over my heart like waves of fire! I am not myself in such moments, I am—I know not what. Oh, tell me again, Oswald, that you do not care for her, that you were never more than acquaintances! for I cannot rest unless I know your heart is all mine!"

And she gazed imploringly upon him.

"Oh, Heaven help me to give this woman the love she merits!" thought Oswald, devoutly, and rejoined:

"Oh, Leo, be assured—rest on my words—do not doubt me. Your love and confidence will give me hope, strength, life, peace; your mistrust and dark looks will make me miserable. Leo, if you care for me, if you would see my fellow men trust me—for Heaven's sake, trust me!"

His voice, hoarse and tremulous all through the last sentence, faltered and nearly broke at its close, and his head fell upon his hands.

"Forgive me, Oswald—forgive me!" exclaimed Leonla, remorsefully. "I knew not the wealth of your love—I dreamt not of it. I was foolish, weak! Oh, forgive me!"

And, kneeling down by her side, she rested her head upon his knee, and wept like a child.

He raised his eyes and gazed upon her fondly yet regretfully. Then he gently stroked her glossy hair, and ran his fingers over her white forehead, and softly murmured her name.

She looked up, the tears still glistening in her azure orbs, and smiled affectionately, confidently. He took her hands within his own, lifted her to her feet, and once more drew her to his breast.

"Leonla," he said, touching her brow with his lips. "In my heart I have sworn to make you happy, to love and honour you as long as I live."

The words, so deep and earnest, thrilled Leonla, and for a moment deprived her of the power of speech. Then raising her eyes to his, she returned:

"And I, Oswald—I, alas! fear I am not worthy of it. I never saw your real nobility until this hour, and now my love is increased tenfold."

"Mamma, you haven't sent for me yet!" echoed from the entry. "You said you would!"

"The blessed child!" said Leonla, rapturously and softly added, "you will love her, Oswald? She will be ours!"

"Yes, darling, ours," he repeated, solemnly.

CHAPTER II.

AN HALF-HOUR later Oswald Loring left the elegant mansion of Mrs. Milton, and crossing Montague Square, walked slowly down the Grove. His heart was heavy; he felt not as the lover but as one resigned to an unpleasant duty which must last through life.

He did not lose the beautiful woman who gave him so freely her whole heart, and the only way in which he could escape to himself his false declarations and assumed tenderness was to think that at least he had saved her the pain of indifference. He had long known her feelings towards himself, and to-day he had taken advantage of them to save his own honour.

It had required long hours of agitated thought to bring his conscience into a state of partial acquiescence, it had pained him deeply to enter upon the ordeal, but it was his only alternative.

Leonla was rich, and Oswald needed money.

After the death of Oswald's parents, which event occurred some ten years previous to the opening of this story, there was left to him but one real friend, and he, a gentle, noble-hearted old man who had known Oswald since his boyhood, and had always taken a warm interest in his welfare. At the settlement of his father's estate he had exerted himself to see that justice was done to the young man, and Oswald more than suspected that his friend had paid some of the debt out of his own small fortune, that he—Oswald—might have a sufficiency wherewith to support himself comfortably, until he should obtain a fair practice.

After this, for five long years, Oswald neither saw nor heard of his friend, and he feared that he was dead. Then on one cold winter morning, the young lawyer received a telegram requesting him to come immediately to a small town where Nathan Hawes was lying at the village inn, very ill, and was anxious to see him.

Oswald obeyed at once. He found his old friend sadly changed; the once round face was pinched and hollow, the merry eyes were deep and dull, and the large, rotund form was reduced almost to a skeleton. Oswald could not conceal his grief, and turned toward the window and gazed out upon the snow-clad hills and valleys. The last friend of his childhood would soon leave him.

Nathan Hawes bade him draw near. Oswald complied and sat down by the couch.

"I shall not be long with you, my boy," said the sufferer, by an effort raising himself up on the pillow; "and before I go I would do an act of justice. Listen now, and remember what I say. In Brighton there lies a young boy in whom I have an interest. His picture is in that box on the table, so I need not describe him. He is at school, and resides with a woman by the name of Ward, whose cottage is in Lent Street. Now I want you to look out for him, to see that he has all he needs, and is kindly treated. For this purpose I shall leave in your charge £2000—every penny I have in the world. You will do this, Oswald?"

"With all my heart. But I think it would be better to have the proper papers drawn and the bequest witnessed in due form."

"If I trust you, Oscar, can't you trust yourself?"

"Certainly," answered Oswald, dropping his eyes as if his feelings were injured. "I was not thinking of that, but rather if someone should seize your property. In that case I could not do it."

"There is no one to seize it. I confide wholly in your honour. No one will know that I left a shilling."

"You had a brother five years ago. Is he dead?"

"True, I had; surely, Oswald, I am falling fast to forget poor Jacob. I hear from him three years ago

but not since; he was in Pernambuco, then. I have an idea. As you want some outside proof that you received the trust, why not write to Jacob, giving him the fact, and asking him to preserve the letter? Jacob is a good man, and a good brother; he would never wish to take one penny from little Charlie."

"It is a risk, he may not be alive. You may also have some outstanding debts, which you do not think of now and, if so, the legality of the gift which you propose to make would be questioned, and I should, at least be placed in an unpleasant position. Understand me, my dear friend, I speak professionally. You regard this act as a bequest, but you do not want a will made, hence it becomes in law merely a gift to me."

"Yes—I see—but I trust you, my dear boy; that is my point, I rely on your honour to execute my wishes without the compulsion of law. I have no debts—not one—and that disposes of the last objection."

"I am grateful for the confidence you repose in me, but remember, my dear friend, that I am but human. Think of it. You place in my care without any restriction which could bind me all your property. Heaven knows my principles are good, but is this not too great a reliance to place upon any man, I might say too great a temptation?"

"Your very words, Oswald, prove that you are worthy of it," said the old man, with an affectionate smile. "Your very doubt of yourself is Charlie's safeguard, for one who had the remotest thought of dishonesty would endeavour to convince me that nothing could induce him to be derelict in his duty."

"Then I will do as you wish, but you must have witnesses to the transaction, and you must give me the amount in current money, for a cheque would be good for nothing if you should happen to—"

"Die before it could be cashed," interposed Nathan Hawes, seeing that his young friend hesitated over the said word. "Yes, I know that, and have provided for it. Now write to Jacob."

"You have not told me the child's name," said Oswald, seating himself at the table.

"Call him Webster Hawes—Charles Webster Hawes," replied the old man, as if the question pained him. "He was nine years old last August—the tenth day—and that was the last time I saw him. He is a bright handsome boy, and good—very good. Oh, Oswald, I know you will be true to your trust—I know you will, for you will always think that Heaven, your own soul, and the spirit of your lifelong friend are the only ones that know of it. These will bind you more firmly than any terrors of earth could." And he glanced imploringly upon the barrister, and tears trickled slowly down the sunken cheeks.

"Yes, dear, dear friend, Heaven helping me, I will be constant to your wishes," rejoined Oswald, in a husky voice.

A silence now fell between them, and the young man proceeded with his writing. He was careful to make the intentions of his friend clear, and to declare emphatically that not one penny of this money was his (Oswald's) by any right, title, or interest, whatsoever.

When he had finished he read the instrument aloud, and then made two elaborate copies, one of which he was to retain himself and the other he intended to send to Jacob. If the first should fail to reach its destination.

Nathan Hawes thanked him tenderly for his forethought, and then requested him to open his trunk and take therefrom an ebony box.

Oswald obeyed.

"Now open it—the key is in that socket," said the invalid, indicating the left side of the trunk.

After some search the young lawyer found the key, and, having raised the lid of the box, brought it to the bedside of his friend.

For a moment the two men gazed upon each other and then Nathan Hawes put his hand into the box and drew forth Bank of England notes to the value of two thousand pounds.

"We must have witnesses to this act," said Oswald.

The sick man mutely assented, and the landlord was called, who, in turn, summoned the physician and a clergyman who happened to be in the house.

In their presence Nathan Hawes passed the money to Oswald Loring and declared it his free gift. Then Oswald required the physician to sign a deposition that the sufferer was in his right mind, and, this being accomplished, the young man noted down the address of each and dismissed them.

Now he once more sat down beside the bed and took his friend's hand within his. The old man looked up gratefully, and his lips moved as if he were blessing him. Oswald knew not what to say—his grief confused and oppressed him. Suddenly Nathan Hawes caught Oswald's wrist with all his remaining strength and hurriedly whispered:

"My dear Oswald, go to Charlie, I feel that he needs you more than I do. You can get to London to-night. But go—his my last request. I—I—" he paused and a choking sob broke from his lips—"shall never see you again on earth, you dear, noble boy, but we shall meet up there—up there, Oswald! But go—go! Heaven bless you! Remember little Charlie. Farewell."

Oswald Loring's eyes were dim and misty as he bent down and imprinted a kiss on the pale brow, and his tongue released its duty as he tried to say good bye. But his fingers lingered over those of his friend, and his earnest, manly face beamed a sad but eloquent adieu.

Twenty-four hours later he was in London, and knocking at Mrs. Ward's door. "Where was Charlie? He had gone, the poor woman knew not whither. When was he first missed? Yesterday about this hour. Oswald was stricken with a strange grief; for a moment he knew not how to act, then he hastened to the proper authorities, bade them send detectives in all directions and telegraph to the police to keep a strict watch. He could do no more, and with a heavy heart he retraced his steps, continually thinking:

"How will my poor friend feel to die knowing that Charlie is homeless, unprotected—perhaps dead?"

But Nathan Hawes was spared that. Even while Oswald was thus reflecting, a funeral procession was moving through the streets of the little village, and all that remained of Nathan Hawes was in the hearse. He died an hour after Oswald left him, and when the young man returned he saw only the wardrobe and other relics to mark the place where his friend had once breathed and smiled.

With a certain feeling of reverence Oswald collected these trifles and took them back with him. The landlord of the little inn could make no objection, for Nathan Hawes had paid all his bills, and contracted for his last earthly raiment a week before he died. His impressions had all been singularly correct even to the hour of death.

For a year following these events Oswald spent time and money—not what his friend had left either—in trying to find Charlie, but the faintest clue could not be gained, and at last the most ambitious detectives gave up in despair and declared that the boy was dead or in some foreign country. Hardly satisfied with this, Oswald advertised in French and German papers, offering a reward for information even, but after six months' waiting this yielded nothing, and the young barrister felt that his duty was done.

During all this time he had heard nothing from Jacob Hawes.

One year later, in December, Oswald Loring was in Manchester on business, and while there he met an old schoolfellow and dearly prized friend. They passed the evening together very sociably, and as Henry Leech stepped forth from the hotel Oswald noticed that the snow was falling thick and fast.

About three o'clock in the morning, he was awakened by an alarm of fire, this impressed him deeply, and sleep he could not. It seemed a prescience of approaching trouble.

At seven o'clock the next morning Henry Leech burst into his room, exclaiming, "I am ruined!"

Oswald begged him to explain, and after much circumlocution learned that his friend had been burned out four hours before, that everything was gone, and that he could get no insurance, as his policy and days of grace had expired before the catastrophe.

Perhaps his creditors would give him time, Oswald suggested.

Somewhat encouraged Leech visited some of the principal ones and pleaded for the favour, but without avail, and as three-fourths of his debts were due to them he felt that it would be useless to apply to others.

He did not see Oscar again that day, but on the third following he presented himself, and Oscar exclaimed with sympathy as he saw how worn and pale and haggard he was.

"Come with me," said Leech, in a hollow tone of despair.

Oswald followed him in silence. Through a street after street they went, until a dingy tenement house was reached. Here Leech paused, threw open the door, and in a thick voice bade his companion follow.

The young lawyer stepped into the gloomy entry and walked on carefully until he was ordered to halt. Then ensued a moment of silence, and he thought he heard his friend sob.

What could all this mean?

The question was answered by the creaking of a door, and Oswald beheld a small room, paperless, carpetless, and almost destitute of furniture.

In a high-backed wooden chair he saw a feeble and aged woman, her face the picture of despair.

This must be Henry Leech's mother—and yet he

hardly dared credit his own vision. Were they brought to this?

He sighed, and glanced across the room, and there saw a young mother with her babes at her knee, sobbing as if their little hearts would break. He gazed upon his friend with sad inquiry.

"Yes—it is all true—this is our only home," said Leech, trying to control his voice. "We lost nearly everything, and what was left I have been obliged to sell for necessities. It's hard, old boy—it is hard!" And he clasped his hands tightly together.

"If I could only help you," said Oswald's sympathetic heart, but his reasons could interfere.

There was a faint glimmering of hope in the words. The old lady looked up; the young mother drew a long breath of relief, and the children ceased crying.

Oswald knew that they expected him to say something, perhaps act, and he felt a painful embarrassment. Persons in distress clutch at the slightest hope, and then nuncio harsh feelings if it is withdrawn. Knowing this, Oswald earnestly wished that he had held his tongue.

"If you could, Oswald, my boy, if you could but start me in business, why—"

Henry Leech's voice gave way, and he grasped his friend's hand as a fitting conclusion to his sentence.

"It is asking too much—don't dear," interposed his wife, timidly. But quickly added, "and yet you could pay it all back in a short time, couldn't you?"

"Yes," he answered, and glanced from his aged mother to his little children.

Oswald noted the imploration written so plainly on every face, and imagined the fond hopes that were rising in every heart, and temporarily stilling the pang of grief. They mistook his abstraction for interest, and felt surer of his aid. And at last it was promised to them. Yes, Oswald Loring agreed to lend Henry Leech five hundred pounds for eighteen months. He did not think at the moment it was the money of Nathan Hawes which he was thus disposing of, but he did when it was too late to recall it, and then he could only say "My heart overruled my head—my sympathy ran away with my reasons."

What would you have done, reader? It is a fine question; it embodies another fine question which philosophers would do well to examine: It is better to cultivate the stern or tender feelings of our natures? Look at the circumstances, and see if one of the thousands who read these words can say that Oswald Loring did wrong, morally.

The allotted time passed away, and Henry Leech, having built up a flourishing business, was amply able to pay the debt, but instead he looked his kind friend in the face and insolently said:

"Look here, Loring, that money wasn't yours. Now, if you try to collect it, I'll tell how true you have been to your trust, and—you won't try, will you?"

Incredible! you exclaim. Such black, base ingratitude could not exist in a human breast. It is natural for us to think so, but practical life teaches us differently. This incident is no fiction; it is truth, and painted brighter even than it occurred.

Oswald Loring did not knock his friend down, nor about him, nor even express his contempt for him; but he turned, as one who had lost all confidence in human nature, and walked from the house. He could do nothing. The instant he should attempt to force payment his reputation would be lost for ever he could only strive by economy to make up the deficit. But Jacob Hawes might appear before him any day, and wish to inspect his accounts. When he got back to London, this contingency became a living one, for there was a letter from Jacob acknowledging the receipt of his statements, and saying that he hoped ere long to arrive in London. Now you know why Oswald Loring wished to marry Leonia Milton.

CHAPTER III.

OSWALD LORING had told Leonia the truth when he said that he had never spoken a dozen words at one time the seamstress, Rose Foster. But he might have told more, and said that those times were numerous, if the words were not, and he might have gone still farther, and said that the girl interested him, that her black, sparkling eyes charmed him singularly, and that he wanted to love her, but his self-imposed duty toward Leonia would not let him. And now, as he walked down the great thoroughfare thoughts of Rose entered his mind, and he felt that although he had not deceived Leonia he could not clear himself of the charge of duplicity. This pained him; he wanted to live aright; he earnestly desired to be just and honourable, but even the practice of the golden rule had cast him into the meshes of a net from which he must extricate himself as honestly as possible, and this was the only way.

"Beg pardon, sir."

Oswald recovered his balance, which the rude jostle by the owner of this voice had deprived him of, and looked at the man.

He bore the scrutiny with a sullen air, his small blue-black eyes half-closed and his wide, coarse mouth partially open.

"An evil-looking fellow," thought Oswald, and moved on.

The man stood still a moment, and then stepped around the corner of the next street, where he was joined by a comrade who had evidently been waiting for him.

"That's him, that's Loring," said the first, pointing to the retreating form of the young lawyer.

"The one you ran into, eh?" muttered the other—a type of the common street loafer.

"Yes, of course—didn't I do it a-purpose so you might spot him? He's spooney on Miss Milton, the rich widdler up here in the square, and there may be business for you yet, if you look sharp, and don't crook your dirty elbow too often. I knows 'em both—I do, and I knows other things which is none of your business, or won't be, but you'll get your pay just the same."

"That's all I want. I ain't one of the curious sort, Mister Jim, besides secrets don't pay as well as they used."

"As if you ever knew how they paid. Dry up, and listen to me," said his companion, contemptuously. "I want to watch this Loring while business is going on, and when it ain't, it won't do any hurt to try to get acquainted with the widow's servants—you'll need some new rags though before that. But them'll come. Go now after Loring, and tell me when you come back what olents he had. Hang round the office—look sharp—I'll meet you at Haggerby's at six."

And with these words "Mister Jim" started down the street at a brisk walk, while the other hurried to come up with Loring, which he shortly did, and dogged him nearly to his office door.

"Who has been here, John?" queried Oswald of his office boy, as he entered and placed his hat on the table.

"A woman who wanted a divorce, sir. She is coming in to-morrow. And a man who wanted to sue somebody for slander; and then another woman who talked very little, and looked very blue—she said she would come in at four o'clock. Her name is Foster."

And the youth smiled as if his report pleased him.

"Surely, Rose cannot have come here," thought Oswald, and then asked, "Was she a young woman?"

"No, oh, no, sir."

"Ah!" he merely said, but reflected again—"What an idiot I was! Rose is too high-spirited to come and ask me why I didn't speak to her at Mrs. Milton's." And he seated himself at his desk and began to write.

"This is the lady—Mrs. Foster," said the boy, opening the door of the private office a few minutes later and ushering in a small woman, dressed in black. Oswald dropped his pen and motioned her to a chair.

"You do not remember me, Mr. Loring?" she said, seating herself, and throwing back her veil.

"It is Rose's mother," he thought, and pushed his hand hastily through his hair; then he politely answered:

"I did not at first recognize you. I am very glad to see you, but I trust you have not come to mix yourself up in the law."

She took no notice of his pleasantry, and her face became grave even to sadness.

Oswald hastened to apologize, and then requested her to state her business. As the details of the case have but little bearing on the story we will condense her answer as much as possible.

It appeared that about three weeks previously her only son—a lad about fifteen years of age—was arrested on a charge of larceny from the building of his employers, and in default of bail was committed to jail to await his trial.

And now Mrs. Foster wished Oswald to become his counsel, and save him from his probable fate.

"But you will get him acquitted—oh I know you will!" exclaimed the anguished mother, clasping the young barrister's arm and raising her tearful eyes pleadingly. "He is my only son, and he has always been so good, and worked so hard, and made Rose and me so happy. Oh, it is wicked to blight a young soul into the vortex of crime by shutting him from the world and forcing him among criminals. He is innocent, and—"

"My dear madam, I shall do all I can. I can promise you nothing, but I shall work with all my strength to prove this affair, for, to me, it seems like a conspiracy to ruin your son's character. But remember, we must have evidence of this. I would not

pain you, neither would I hold out illusory hopes. The case is dark, very dark, but we'll try to make it brighter. I will go to the jail, and see Robert, and hear his story, and then see the officers. You may call in a day or two."

"But I—I have so much work to do; if you could send your office boy with a letter it would accommodate me."

"Oranges—buy any oranges!" bawled a big mouth in the middle of a broad face, and Mister Jim's companion stuck his head in at the door.

"No—clear out!" answered Oswald, very irritably.

"What I'm deaf? Buy any or-ranges?" repeated the fellow, with insolent pertinacity.

Oswald started toward the door, and the pseudo-vendor, not wishing to be detected in his ruse, hurried from the rooms, gave his basket to its proper owner, who was waiting in the lower entry, and made all haste to find "Mister Jim."

"Perhaps if you should hear anything particular, you might—but it is asking too much," she added, checking herself. "And yet I feel such an interest. Ah! Mr. Loring, words are powerless to describe my sorrow."

She brushed her hand across her eyes and drew a long, weary breath.

"Nay, make any request. I assure you I shall be only too glad to render you all the assistance in my power."

Ah! Oswald Loring, that sympathy of yours will work your ruin, if you are not more careful.

"I was about to ask you to—to call in the evening—any evening, if you could do so without discommoding yourself—that is, you know, if you should hear anything particular."

The young lawyer bit his lip; anything but this he would have cheerfully granted, but yet he had virtually pledged his word; he could not retract. He wished to avoid Rose altogether—it was a debt he owed his honour to do so; but now—He passed his hand across his brow and regretfully said:

"I will come."

She thanked him fervently, and departed. Oswald stood still a moment, while probabilities and conjectures ran riot in his mind. His reason censured him, and justly. He had no right to expose himself to temptation.

"Oh, that miserably, treacherous heart of mine," he excitedly began.

"What, sir?" queried the boy, appearing at the entrance.

"Nothing, nothing!" he impatiently answered.

"You may go home now, John."

The youth clutched his hat, repeated his respectful "Good night, sir," and vanished as only ghosts and office boys can.

Loring threw himself into his chair and rested his head upon his hands. It required but little acuteness to see the inevitable result of his being too often in the society of Rose. The fact that a year's separation had not driven thoughts of her from his mind was a dangerous one—dangerous to himself, his own interests, and to the beautiful Leonia.

As we have said, Oswald really desired to love Leonia and make her happy, to be true to her in thought and action. He must not see Rose at all—he must transact all business by letter, even at the expense of having that hateful word "mean" applied to him as only woman can apply it.

"I have heard of men falling in love with their wives after marriage," he mused, with an assumption of cheerfulness, "and why can't I? Leonia loves me, bless her! and I doubt not I shall sometime idolize her."

With these words he arose, arranged his papers and then closed the office for the night.

As he turned the key he heard a voice once familiar, and started in surprise. Before him stood Rose, her black eyes dancing, her white teeth shining between her lips like pearls between rubies.

Oswald straightened himself up and endeavoured to appear severe.

"I am sorry to trouble you," she said, in a sweetly pathetic voice, "but mamma was so anxious she sent me back to ask a question. I would rather not have come, but she was so tired. Can Robert come out now if we can get bail?"

"Yes," answered Oswald, and started downstairs.

She walked along by his side, talking of Robert. Politeness compelled him to see her to a bus and interest kept him there, and he rode half-way home with her.

Ah, what little hammers are these circumstances that drive the wedges to split our lives!

(To be continued.)

EGYPTIAN BIRDS AND ANIMALS.—It is worthy of

notice that among the feathered and four-legged animals domesticated by the ancient Egyptians, ducks are not represented; moreover, it may be observed that there are no data to show that the domestic fowl was known to the ancient Egyptians. The object so-called on the cartouche of the builder of the Great Pyramid resembles a chick, both in appearance and figure, but it might be the young of the quail, which is still plentiful.

The Duc d'Aumale has determined to take a step which many persons may deem to be fraught with much risk. The duke inherited the vast domains and the bulk of the immense personal wealth of the last of the Condés who, a little more than forty years since, closed a prodigal life by a dreadful death, the mystery surrounding which has never been cleared up. Among the broad lands which are now the property of the third son of Louis Philippe is the magnificent estate of Chantilly, situated some five-and-twenty miles from Paris; and the duke has decided on entirely rebuilding, in accordance with the original designs, that famous Chateau of Chantilly, which was sacked and wrecked half a dozen times during the first Revolution, and of whose "original" fabric there is now standing scarcely more than remains of Kenilworth. The expense of the work of restoration imputed to the duke is estimated at four millions of francs.

OUR MOUNTAIN STREAM.

ONCE more we stand upon the banks
Of our dear mountain stream;
Where we were wont in days of yore
To ponder and to dream;

Its mirrored surface still reflects
The beauties of the skies;
As when I first in tones of love
Compared them to thine eyes.

The softening shadow gently fall,
The sky is fair and bright,
As when we in those joyous hours
Were wrapped in fond delight.

The sparkling billows swell and break,
The sunlight still does gleam;
As when we strayed upon the banks
To wander and to dream.

Though years have fled, and swept away
Our pleasures in the past,
Though sombre clouds have gather'd thick
And over us are cast;

Yet still can memory through the gloom
Impart a brighter gleam,
And point our hearts to bliss enjoyed
By our dear mountain stream. F. J.

How does it fare with that hapless creature the seal? Mr. John Willis Clarke tells us but too plainly. We are perfectly appalled at the statistics of inhuman and indiscriminate slaughter there given. In one district, for thirty years, from 80,000 to 90,000 seals were annually slaughtered by a Russian fur company "without regard to sex or season." An English company in two years took from an island 400,000 skins of seals, killing the animals without any respect to sex or season. From the small islands in Bass's Strait 36,000 skins were sent home in one year, and the result is thus described by one who recently visited those islands:—"I should as soon expect to meet a 'sea-lion' on London Bridge as in any one of the islands in Bass's Strait." This reckless waste of life has, then, already depopulated the Australian coast of seals, and unless strict measures are taken to regulate the slaughter and preserve the animals during the close season the North Sea will soon be in like case.

THE papers chronicled how the Princess of Wales accompanied her husband to France, but with all their vigilance, says a Bombay writer, they did not hear about a certain small box being placed on board the "Serapia." Well there was such a box, and all that Sir Bartle Frere, in whose charge it was placed, knew about it was that he was to take particular care of it, and not to let the Prince know anything of its existence. When the "Serapia" arrived the box was sent to Parell, and on the next morning, the Prince's birthday, and his first morning on Indian soil, his eyes rested upon a large portrait, beautifully adorned with Indian flowers. The portrait was that of the Princess. It had been secretly placed in the Prince's bedroom in order to surprise him, and it is unnecessary to say this was the contents of the mysterious box which had been so jealously watched by Sir Bartle Frere, and about which Miss Frere was the only possessor of the secret.



[EDITH FINDS A PROTECTOR.]

EDITH OF THE CLIFF;

OR,

THE SMUGGLER.

CHAPTER V.

It was late in the afternoon of the day following the events last recorded, that Edith of the Cliff was on her way home from the village, where she had been to make a few petty purchases for herself. She had struck the narrow way leading from the main road towards the outer cliff, when she was joined by Richard Moncton, who came out from a mossy bank by the side of the path. He was smiling in his most admirable manner, and wished to take Edith's small bundle and bear it for her; but she objected. It was a light affair, and she preferred to carry it herself.

"At least, my pretty Edith, I may walk by your side?"

The poor girl felt very uncomfortable, and would have given all the buttons and ribbons in her bundle could some kind spirit have transported her instantly to her home on the Cliff.

There was something more than repulsive in the presence of the man at her side. She had come to fear him as much as she disliked him. There was something to her intensely evil in the gleaming of his basilisk eyes, and even his voice had a treacherous sound.

The beauty which others saw was to her as the exterior of a whitened sepulchre, and she felt sure that deceit and corruption dwelt within.

But what could she do? She could not well repulse him, nor would she act the hypocrite by professing a friendliness which she could not feel. With a single glance into his clean, smooth-shaven face, she said:

"The road is free, Richard Moncton, to you as to me; but if you care to please me you will leave me to walk alone."

"No, no, sweet Edith. You know not the dangers that may beset your path. There is a vessel lying in the Pool which, I think, is a smuggler, if not something worse. At all events, you shall not be subjected to insult from members of a lawless and law-defying crew if I can help it. While I am by your side no man will dare offend you by an insulting look. Ah, dear girl, if you would but accept my protection for all time! You do not dream how gladly I would devote even my very life to your service."

"Richard Moncton, why do you speak thus to me? did I not give you an answer to all such possibilities, or impossibilities, on the evening of May-day?"

"Ay, sweet one, but do you remember my pledge given at that time? I told you I would not take your answer then, and I did not. I told you to wait—to take time for thought; that I would love you always; and would, in the end, win your love in return. I had hoped, Edith, that you might have taken a sensible view of the matter by this time, and so I ventured to join you here. You have it in your power, girl, to make me very happy."

She glanced up at him with a scornful look, with scorn and contempt in every changing line and shade of her beautiful face, knowing full well that his speech came from no heart, nor from any depth of true feeling. There was not a particle of soul-fire in his black eye; not a wave of warmth in his smooth cheek; and his speech, where it was not harsh and grating, was simply oily and whining. She stopped in the path and faced him.

"Richard Moncton, as I said to you once before, I now say again—let this thing end here. Do not force me to speak harshly or unkindly."

"Unkindly," repeated the headlong suitor, with a mocking laugh. "Why, you are giving me the unkindest out it is possible for woman to give. But I will not take it. Hold! Stop! Hear me out."

She had started to walk on, but he caught her by the arm and held her back.

"Mr. Moncton, do not detain me."

She struggled to free herself, but he held her fast.

"Edith, I detain you for your own good," he said, with an effort to suppress his rising passion. "You know not what you are doing. My father, the first man in Arncliffe, selects you for his daughter-in-law, and I, with full power to give you home and comfort,—ay, and even luxury—seek you for my wife. I ask you candidly, without any thought of threat, do you think we will suffer ourselves to be thwarted by a nameless girl whom we would elevate and honour?"

"Nameless!" cried Edith, her face aflame, and her large brown eyes blazing. "I would rather be nameless for ever than bear the name that is yours! For the last time I tell you I will never be your wife! Now let me go!"

She broke from him, and started to speed away, but he caught her again, this time revengefully and savagely, and with a fierce oath.

"Hark ye, girl: even though you go from me now, it shall not be for long, you shall rue this day, I swear it! you shall rue it if you do not take back those words."

His grip upon her arm hurt her, and the fiendish

malevolence of his look and tone frightened her, and in her great distress she cried aloud for help.

He caught her around the shoulders, and tried to stop her mouth with his hand, and he might have succeeded had not a new actor suddenly appeared upon the scene.

"How now, Master Richard! Is this a specimen of your manhood? Unhand the maiden instantly!"

Richard turned quickly at the sound of the voice, and beheld the commander of the brigantine.

Edith also turned, and her eyes rested upon a form and a face that inspired her with hope and confidence at once. It was a manly form, erect, powerful, and vigorous, and the face was more than handsome,—it was true and loyal. As the shipwrecked mariner, floating in mid-ocean on a frail spar, beholds the white gleaming of the canvas of an approaching ship, so did the maid of the Cliff behold this new-comer. She had never to her knowledge seen him before, but his was a face so frank and so fair, with the whole soul of the inner man stamped so unmistakably upon it, that she could not mistake. Under the spur of the pain and fright she sprang to his side, not to touch him with her hand, or to speak to him, but to get safely away from her persecutor.

"Captain Drummond!" exclaimed Richard, as soon as he could fairly comprehend.

"At your service, sir," returned Guy, with a nod.

"By Heavens, sir! it shall be a service that will not please you if you interfere thus unwarrantably in my affairs!"

"Ah, but I have a warrant, Master Moncton."

"How now, sir? How a warrant?"

"The warrant which every true man has to protect woman in danger or distress—a warrant given me by the Supreme Being that made me."

"Bah! your heroics won't go down with me. Out of my path, or it shall be worse for you!" And Richard Moncton advanced a pace, with his fists clenched.

"Easy, Richard Moncton," said Drummond, with something like a smile upon his face, but it was a smile so scornful and so threatening and so indicative of conscious power that the steward's son took only the first step in advance. "Easy, sir," the new-comer continued, the smile giving place to a stern, dangerous look. "I think this lady is the maid of the Cliff. I heard her call for help. Upon coming to her rescue I find her in the hands of a ruffian. Surely my duty is plain. Lady," he said, turning to the maiden, who shrunk by his side, "will you accept my escort to your home?"

"Oh, kind sir, yes. Save me from that man."

"Fear him not." At this point Richard burst forth with a volley of oaths, fierce and vindictive. "Miserable outlaw! Dare to step in my way and I will take your heart's blood! You don't know whom you have to deal with when you interfere with Richard Moncton."

Again that mocking smile upon the seaman's face. "Ah, Master Richard, but I do know exactly. I know you very well. It is you who don't know yourself. You don't know how weak, puffy and helpless you are. And now, sir, leave us. Your road lies not this way."

Richard Moncton's rage was at its extremest height. In his wrath he uttered a tremendous oath and sprang forward, with his tightly-clasped fist raised to strike.

He surely did not know with what manner of man he had to deal. Without a ripple of temper upon his face and with an eye clear and steady, Guy Drummond awaited the onset. With his left arm he threw up the assailant's fist, and then, with the force and swiftness of a cannon ball, he delivered a blow full upon Moncton's face, sending him down as though lightning had struck him.

"Do not be alarmed, dear lady," said Guy, as Edith uttered a low cry of terror. "The villain is not seriously injured. I think, however, I will clip his wings for him. It may do him good to rest here."

Thus speaking, the champion drew from his pocket a few lengths of marline, with which he proceeded to bind Richard's arms behind him at the elbows and also tightly to secure his ankles.

"Now, lady, for the cot upon the Cliff. Give your fears to the winds and let this fresh air invigorate you."

Edith looked up eagerly and earnestly into the handsome and loyal face. The voice sounded like rich music in her ears, and from feelings which came without her will, without her power to suppress them, she laid her hand confidently upon his proffered arm.

"I would not thus offer you my arm," he said, "did I not see that excitement has weakened you. May I know what Richard Moncton is to you and what was the cause of the scene I have just witnessed?"

Without hesitation and in a very few words Edith told to him the whole story, from Moncton's first unexpected approach to her on May-day to the present.

"And," she added, "what is most surprising of all is that his father professes to be anxious that I should be—"

"Richard's wife," suggested Guy. "Yes, sir. I cannot understand it. Why should he, the steward of Arncliffe, wealthy and powerful, wish to marry his son to a poor, nameless wail like me?"

"Whence comes Peter Moncton's wealth, think you?" asked Guy.

"Oh, sir, not honestly, I am sure. But do not ask me. Go and ask the tenants of Arncliffe, whom he grinds into the dust and whom he sends adrift when they dare to complain."

"No, lady, I will ask you so more of your neighbours. Just at this moment I am not so particularly concerned about Moncton's stewardship of Arncliffe as I am about his dealings in another direction, dealings in which his son is interested with him."

"I think I know what you mean, sir." "If you do, will it not surprise you to know also that I am commander of the brigantine now lying in the Pool?"

"You?" uttered Edith, looking up with a startled expression.

"It is even so. And, knowing this, do you fear to trust me?"

"But is not the brigantine a—"

"Smuggler, would you say?"

"Yes, sir. Is she not a smuggler?"

"And if she were, would you fear to trust her commander?"

Edith bent her head, and walked slowly on in silence; but her hand made a movement to leave the arm whereon it rested.

"What could you think of me, knowing me to be commander of the brigantine?" pursued Guy.

"And she a smuggler?" added the maiden, hesitatingly.

"If you will have it so, yes."

Edith looked up with a sudden new light in her clear brown eyes and with a warm, generous flush upon her beautiful face.

"I should think," she said, "that circumstances might have led a good man to be a smuggler."

"Edith, I thank you for those words. And now trust me—trust me fully, and with faith. You shall not regret it."

Why did her name, pronounced by those lips, sound so sweet, so like rich music echoing back from happier times? Why did his words so charm and soothe her, ringing down into her heart with a melodious throbbing never felt before?

A brief pause, and then Guy asked about the light-house, and the lightkeeper, and the life in the little cot upon the Cliff.

Edith brightened as she answered, and until they reached the cot the conversation was free and interesting.

The sun was touching the Dartmoor Hills when they stepped upon the upper shelf of the Cliff, and they found the lightkeeper standing in the open doorway of the cot.

Donald started when he saw the handsome sailor and a cloud came upon his brow. He glanced from the caller to his pet, and the cloud deepened when he observed how radiantly beautiful she looked.

"You are late, Edith," he said, as she came up.

"Dear gentleman, I have been detained. I will tell you about it by-and-bye. This is Captain Drummond. He has done me a great service."

Guy Drummond advanced, and put out his hand.

"Donald Macdonald, he said, 'give me the hand of an honest old man.'"

For the life of him the lightkeeper could not hold back his hand, nor could he keep the cloud upon his brow.

There was something in the look and the speech of the young man that pleased him.

He was sure he must be the commander of the strange brigantine, and yet he could not resist him. He not only gave his hand, but he moved back and invited the captain to enter his humble abode.

Guy entered and took a seat, and when Edith had removed her hat and made the same and told to her guardian the story of her adventure.

She told of the danger of Richard Moncton with arms of force, but her face brightened when she told of the coming of her rescuer.

The old man listened with varied emotions. He was fearful and wrathful by turns, and his exclamations were frequent and emphatic. In the end he looked kindly and gratefully upon his guest, and thanked him for the service he had rendered.

"And you left Richard Moncton bound by the wayside?" he said, after a time.

"Bound hand and foot," answered Guy, with a smile. "If his friends do not find him before, I will set him free when I go down."

"But you will be careful," said Edith, impulsively. "He is a bold and a reckless man, and capable, I verily believe, of doing anything in the way of vengeance."

The sailor's handsome face was flushed with a warm, grateful glow as he replied:

"Fear not for me, dear lady; I think I know the man."

"Perhaps not," said Donald, with a feeling which would seem to indicate that he, too, was interested in the youthful adventurer.

And why should he not be?

Had not the young man—a smuggler-chief possibly—come to the rescue of his pet—his darling?

"Richard Moncton is evil and revengeful," went on the old man; "and his father is—"

"Say on, good sir," urged Guy, as the lightkeeper stopped short.

"I may have already said more than I ought," rejoined the old man, meekly. "Peter Moncton is steward of Arncliffe, and wields great power here, especially in the absence of the earl. His anger might be a dangerous thing."

"But Peter Moncton's power and authority as steward do not extend to this Cliff?" queried Drummond.

"No, thank Heaven!" responded Donald. "Many years ago, long before my grandfather's time, the then Earl of Arncliffe gave this Cliff, with all its approaches and all its belongings, to the crown."

"Your grandfather, then, was lightkeeper here?"

"Yes; and my father after him. Ah! I shall have no son to follow me."

At this point Edith arose and set about preparing supper.

"You have had no family, then?" suggested Guy.

The old man's lip trembled and his eye moistened. "Ah, I had two sons. One of them was drowned off this very cliff in a storm. He was my youngest. My oldest boy was Douglas—bold, handsome and brave. He would have been—bless me! how the years fly!—he would have been forty years old had he lived till now. He fell in India."

"Was he a soldier?"

"Yes. He was in Sir Walter Seymour's splendid troop."

"He was shot in battle?"

"Yes. He was shot in battle while leading a charge. He was a sergeant, and his superiors of the detached squadron had been either killed or disabled; so he was in command."

"Then he died nobly."

"Yes, thank Heaven for that! And so did the other die nobly. He found his death in trying to save men from a wrecked vessel."

"But," said Guy, hopefully, "touching your older son, very often word comes to England of the death of those who do not die."

"Ah! but we had a letter from Colonel Gray—he that is now Earl of Arncliffe. He was in that same battle, on General Seymour's staff. He saw Douglas in the thick of the fight, surrounded by barbarians, and saw him fall."

"Was his body recovered?"

"No—and then, for a time, was my only hope. But that was long years ago. He has not been heard from since. Now, as I shall leave no son of mine to keep the old light."

"You must yourself have had adventures during your long service on this cliff," suggested Guy, with the evident danger of losing the old man away from a painful subject.

And he was successful.

Donald began at once to tell the story of his adventures, and as he proceeded his eyes brightened and his face flushed up.

He was thus engaged when Edith announced that supper was ready.

"Captain Drummond, will you share our humble meal?"

"With pleasure, good Donald—that is, if it will not discommode our fair guest of the Cliff."

"I have set a plate and a chair for you, sir."

CHAPTER VI.

If the meal was humble, it certainly seemed regal to Guy Drummond. Better company he had never found, nor more tasteful and cleanly surroundings. There were none of the showings of wealth, nor an attempt at ostentatious, but neat and solid comfort, and the traces everywhere of a true woman's orderly presence and supervision.

At her post as hostess, Edith was self-possessed and watchful of the wants of those whom she served. Once or twice the rich colour mounted from cheek to temple as she met the earnest, admiring gaze of the guest; but it was not a gaze which could offend. Respect and reverence were so blended with the admiration that a woman with ordinary interpenetration could not but have seen that the offering was from the heart, instinctive and pure.

A question from Donald led Drummond to speak of the French marine, and at length he opened out into a spirited description of the maritime affairs of different nations, showing not only that he had travelled extensively, but that he had been a keen and careful observer. And one thing more he clearly displayed—that he was well and thoroughly educated.

For an hour after the table had been cleared the guest entertained the lightkeeper by his interesting stories and adventures and sparkling anecdotes, and at the end of that time he announced that it was time for him to depart.

A silence fell, during which Edith's eyes were bent to the floor, while Donald seemed very thoughtful. The silence was broken by Guy.

"My good Donald, I trust this may be my last visit to your cot. Will you not invite me to call free—to call when I please?"

Edith looked quickly up into her guardian's face, with an eager, anxious expression.

The old man caught the look, and his brow and his lips contracted as with inward trouble. Evidently he knew not what to say. Out of the fairness of his heart he would have said to his handsome, genial guest: "Come when you please;" but care for the precious girl left to his charge—the girl that had become all-in-all to him, and upon whom his all of earthly love was centred, tied his tongue.

He would not willingly bring a danger to his darling, and he knew not how to dissemble. For a brief space he was in misery.

The visitor had seen it all, and he could not fail to understand. His quick eye had caught Edith's anxious and almost imploring look, and he had marked the shadow of trouble upon the lightkeeper's face.

By-and-bye he arose from his chair, and paced several times to and fro across the room, his head bent and his arms folded across his breast.

Both Donald and Edith watched him narrowly, wondering what could occupy his thoughts. Finally he resumed his seat, with a waking smile upon his handsome face and a new light dancing in his clear gray eyes.

"Donald," he said, "if I tell you a secret will you hold it sacred?"

"If," replied the old man, after a little thought, "can do so with honour, yes."

"And you, Edith," turning to our heroine, "will you too hold it sacred?"

She did not require to think. She knew that Guy Drummond would ask nothing which she could not honourably grant.

And she answered, promptly:

"I will hold it sacred."

"Donald Murchison, you believe that I am commander of a smuggler—that I am myself a contrabandist?"

There was something in the words and in the manner of the speech that sent a bright flush of joyous thankfulness to Edith's face.

"The lightkeeper replied, with much surprise:

"How can I help believing so, have you not landed contraband goods?"

"No."

"How not? Were not such goods landed from your vessel last night?"

"Were you on the watch?" asked Guy, with a smile.

"Yes," said the old man, after a brief pause. "I am willing to confess that I was. Richard Moncton had offered love to my pet, and his father had backed him in his suit for her hand. I had long suspected they were deeply engaged in contraband traffic. If I could have proof of this I might have a hold upon them in case of emergency. I saw the brigantine when she came in, and I suspected she was a smuggler. Why should she have run into the Pool else? Suspecting this, I watched to see what part Peter Moncton took in her unloading—I saw last night."

A look of real distress and some upon Edith's face, but presently, as her guardian ceased speaking, Guy's bright smile dissipated it.

"In one direction," said the young man, "you saw properly, and in another your suspicions were just. A valuable lot of liquor, wines, tobacco, and other goods of less moment was transferred last night from my vessel to Peter Moncton's barge, and he believed then, and believes now, that they were contraband. And he believes another thing; he believes that the stamp and the brands of the revenue department, borne upon every package, were admit tokens executed by myself."

"And were they not?" asked the lightkeeper, excitedly.

"No, my dear old Donald. Every article thus transferred from my vessel had been duly entered and appraised at Portsmouth, and the custom duties paid in full, and I had obtained from competent authority written permission to discharge my cargo wherever on the shores of the English Channel I might find it convenient."

"But," said Donald, in a dazed way, "how could you—that is, how could the steward—"

"You mean," interrupted Guy, with a light laugh, as the old man became confused, "how could I offer those goods to Peter Moncton at a price which he would be willing to pay?"

"Yes, exactly," acknowledged the lightkeeper.

"I will tell you, Peter Moncton will never remove those goods from the place where he has stored them; and where those are there are more, which I know to be contraband, to the value of several thousand pounds."

"But, captain, I do not—Are you—"

"Ah, Donald, that is my secret; but you shall have it. I did not fail to observe that you had a reason for not wishing me to visit your aunt. I divined your reason at once, and respected it. I honoured you for it. The man admitted freely to the society of your precious ward should be above reproach and above suspicion. In order that I may, if possible, occupy that place, I give to you my secret. I am an officer, honoured and trusted in the government service. Of my own will I volunteered to find the leading spirits of the contraband traffic in this section of the Devonshire coast, and to that end I resorted to the ruse which placed me in such an unfortunate light with those who may discover my nocturnal movement without understanding the why and the wherefore. My officers and my crew are men true and loyal, and are all at this present time in the King's service. Now, mark you, this is the secret I would have you keep. You can see how I might be thwarted if my true character were known to the Monctons. And, again, Donald, you will not forget that my success in indicting the steward and his son may prove a relief to your precious charge, your Edith. I think you will both be silent and circumspect."

It would be impossible to describe the various emotions which had been manifest on Edith's face during Guy's personal explanation. There was joy most surely, as though it was her right to rejoice in the honour and renown of the handsome officer, and swiftly following this came a cloud—a nebulous, darkening mist, from which she seemed to regard the hero as something far above and beyond her.

Donald Murchison was troubled no more. With his broad face glowing, and his kindly eyes gleaming with unclouded brightness, he arose from his great chair and put forth his hand.

"Captain Drummond," he said, with a gush of grateful pride and warm friendship, "thank Heaven, you have shown me the way clear to follow the dictates of my heart. I trust you as you have trusted me—as one man of truth and honour should trust his fellow. And now, sir, I will answer a question asked some time since. My humble cot is open to you. Come when you will you will not only be welcome but the sight of your fresh young face will gladden my heart."

Guy returned the lightkeeper's warm grip, but he could not help smiling, just lightly, at the idea of his own "fresh young face," when he thought of his five-and-twenty years—of the years he had spent under exposure to storm and tempest, and of the probable fact that he, to his youth, had seen more of the real life of the world than had Donald in his old age.

And yet it was pleasant to hear the old man speak so honestly and sincerely of the freshness and youthfulness of his face.

He was human, though a captain.

"Good Donald, I thank you from the bottom of my heart, and I do not think I shall trespass upon your kindness."

"But," he added, turning to Edith, "what says our fair mistress of the realm? Methinks she should have her say concerning the visits of those who are likely to demand more or less of her services."

If the maiden blushed, it was a very sweet and becoming blush. There was no sign of confusion, nor any perceptible perturbation, as she answered:

"Captain Drummond cannot ask that question seriously."

"Yes," he said, smiling, "Captain Drummond might be pleased to hear the truth from the lady's own lips."

"Then, sir," she responded, with a light, silvery laugh, "she bids you a hearty welcome to her kindest care and attention whenever it may please you to come."

"Thank you, lady. And now I will away and see if Master Richard has been freed from his bonds. Remember," he added, as he took up his cap, "my secret is in your keeping. I know it will be safe."

The lightkeeper and his ward both bowed assuringly.

A slight pause, and then the commander of the brigantine turned once more to the maiden.

"Edith," he said, as a brother might have spoken, "for the present you had better not venture alone away from the Cliff. Have patience for a little time, and the danger shall be removed from your path."

"But," quickly returned Edith, with much concern, "is there not danger to yourself as well as to me?"

"Not in the same degree, lady, and then remember I am used to meeting and overcoming danger. Look to yourself. And, good Donald, you will keep your own eyes open?"

"Ay, captain. I am forewarned, and I will try to be forearmed."

Shortly after this the visitor took his leave, and went forth over the Cliff.

Within the cot the lightkeeper and his ward sat for a time in silence. Donald was the first to speak.

"I think," he said, slowly and thoughtfully, and half to himself, "Guy Drummond is a true and loyal man."

Edith did not respond.

"I am well assured," the old man pursued, "that he has spoken to us the truth."

"Can you doubt him?" demanded the maiden, with a touch of reproach in her impulsive accents.

"No, my pet, I do not doubt him. He is a brave man, and men truly brave are truthful."

"He is brave and strong and true," she responded, with a wondrous light in her soft brown eyes.

And after this they spoke of Richard Moncton and his father, but the subject was not pleasant, and it was not long continued.

When Edith at length sat alone in her own little chamber, she folded her hands upon her lap and reflected. Evidently, within a few brief hours a new element had entered into her life. Her face was transfigured. Its beauty had deepened and softened, and her womanly power and intellectuality had come to the surface.

Is it a wonder that even in so short a space she had learned to love her brave and handsome companion?

Such things have been from the earliest morning of humanity, and will continue to be while the human heart lives and throbs.

And Edith thought she should treasure the memory of that evening while she lived.

We may know her thoughts, for she spoke them aloud. And she should see Guy Drummond again. But what could he ever be to her more than a friend?

How could one like him, travel as he had travelled, heart-free? Would it be likely, could it be possible, than an honoured and gallant officer of the Crown, direct from the gay centre of wealth and beauty and fashion, would come and lay his priceless offering of love at her feet—at the feet of the nameless orphan of the wild Devonshire cliff? A deep, long-drawn sigh escaped her, and with her hands pressed upon her bosom she tried to forget. But, waking or sleeping, forgetfulness was not to be hers. The spirit of the new and deeper womanly life was awakened, and it might slumber no more.

Out in the night Guy Drummond walked slowly down the cliff-side, talking with himself.

"She is all I could have hoped; ay, and more—vastly, vastly more. To the man whom she truly loves she will bring a wealth of faith and devotion, of purity and truth, which should crown with happiness any honourable, reasonable life. And I do not think I have impressed her unfavourably. If I can read the human face—if my hope and my vanity do not lead me astray—her heart is now turned toward me in trust, if not in love. If she trusts me now, she shall learn to love me in time. I am very sure there is no rival unless we find him here."

As he thus spoke he had come upon the spot where he had left Richard Moncton, but no Richard Moncton was there now.

He found pieces of the marine stuff, which had been sent with a knife, so he knew that some one had come along and set the captive at liberty.

Beyond this our hero did not take the way of the Pool. He kept on to the highway and thence on to the village, where he stopped at the "Arncliffe Arms." He had engaged room there, for which he paid in advance, and as his expenditure of money was extremely liberal the landlord became his willing servant.

"Jacob," said the guest, after sipping the wine which had just been brought to his room, "this is fine. Where did you find such?"

Jacob Frick's red face turned more red, and he stammered as he answered:

"I had it of a friend, captain."

"One of your real, true friends, eh?"

The fat host bit his thick lips furiously.

"Come, come, Jacob, be not afraid of me. I have sold goods to some of your friends. Did you have this wine of Peter Moncton?"

"Yes, sir; but, dang it! I don't call him my friend. Or if I do call him as he was."

"But he sells you good wine and good tobacco cheaply."

"Not so cheap as you might imagine, sir, considering how he gets 'em. And that ain't all. For every shilling he puts into my purse through his smuggled liquors he grinds two out from it in rents. His heart is hard as a nether millstone, as all the tenants of Arncliffe will tell you. He grinds them all as long as they can bear it, and if they won't be turns 'em out and puts others in their places. But, captain, you won't breathe a word that I've said. If the steward should hear of it I'd lose the den very quickly."

Guy promised to be circumspect and the landlord shortly afterwards left him to himself.

At this same hour, in the steward's private room at the castle, sat Peter Moncton and his son. They were both pale with anger, but Richard's face was the most livid and ghastly. He had told to his father the story of the outrage and indignity which had been put upon him—had told how one of the servants attracted by his cries for help, had come and set him at liberty, and then he had sworn by a fearful oath that he would have revenge; Guy Drummond should suffer.

Peter arose, and paced up and down the room until he had regained something of control over himself, after which he resumed his seat.

"Richard," he said, eagerly, impressively, "let Guy Drummond go for the present. I think he is a dangerous man. The time may come when we can waylay him safely; but that time is not now."

"But," cried Richard, furiously, "would you have me submit tamely to such gross and humiliating indignity?"

"There is another side to the question, my son. Whence the trouble? What was its source? Not in willing, preconceived enmity of Drummond. No, no,—it was for possession of a prize. Now he is the true soldier who, having mapped out what he would possess, rushes resolutely on to its capture. Edith of the Cliff is the prize we seek—the prize we must possess—and, mark you, if Guy Drummond be the man I think him to be, you cannot stab him to the heart more effectually than by carrying off this girl."

Richard's face brightened.

"It may be so, he said. 'First we will secure the girl and then?'"

"And then," interposed the steward, "we will attend farther to Drummond when opportunity offers."

"And how will we trap the fair maid of the Cliff?"
 "We must rest a few days in quiet, my son. Not a move must be made until our winning is sure. It cannot be many days before the 'Starbeam' will be here. Arnold Lowden is our man. The brig and the captain are both ours; let us rest until then, making no move to excite suspicion, and when the favourable moment arrives we will strike to some purpose. We are dealing with our own paid, devoted servants when we step on board the 'Starbeam.' Do you understand?"

Richard understood very well and was content to await the arrival of Captain Arnold Lowden and his vessel.

(To be continued.)

THE DRAMA.

"BROKEN HEARTS" AT THE COURT.

MR. W. S. GILBERT has presented us with another of his fairy tales, and for this one we have nothing to say but words of admiration and gratitude. In "The Palace of Truth," in "The Wicked World," and even in "Pygmalion and Galatea," we detected a missing chord in the harmony and were not slow to discover that that chord was the all-important one in such compositions—the chord of tenderness. The fairy comedies were one and all brilliant attacks upon the falsehood, the selfishness, the cowardice of the world, and they told with an undeniable effect. Critics with a marvellous unanimity accorded to Mr. W. S. Gilbert the place of honour in the circle of cynics and not a few opined that the cynicism was supplemented by the poetic faculty in no inconsiderable degree.

A French or tie—and one of the most learned—declared that could Mr. Gilbert infuse that one missing element in his next fairy parable he would have gained a position in the dramatic world not easily to be mistaken or assailed.

In "Broken Hearts" he has done so, and we welcome in its author, not only the successful humourist, the pungent satirist, but the poet endowed with all-comprehensive sympathy for the pure and unfortunate, and the magic power of expressing that sympathy and imparting something of its characteristics to others. "One touch of nature makes the whole world kin," and the poet is the being who gives the touch and produces the miracle.

Briefly this is the outline of the story in "Broken Hearts—"

The Ladies Hilda, Vavir, Melusine and Amaranthis have retired to an island of fairy-like beauty and have forsworn the love of men. The only man on the island is one Mounsta, a hideous dwarf. Having cast from them that dangerous, treacherous love for the opposite sex, each chooses for herself some inanimate object which may take the place of a lover. The Lady Hilda sets her affections upon a fountain which trickles through the flower-decked rocks; the Lady Vavir lavishes the wealth of her virgin heart upon a sun-dial, and daily decks its column with sweet-scented many coloured wreaths.

Happy in their illusions, all would go well with them but for the fatal clouds which hangs over the child-like Vavir. She is doomed to die, and in her clear face and deep, dreamy eyes, her loving and beloved sister Hilda sees the shadow of the grim headman—Consumption. Only in the quiet serenity and balmy air of the enchanted island could such a fragile flower thrive, and so the Lady Hilda, while she cherishes her dear sister's life, hopes and hopes on.

But while they have given over love, there is one on the island who has not, and that, despite his crushed form and hideous face, is Mounsta; he loves with a mad, unreasoning passion the Lady Hilda.

One morning while occupied upon the beach Mounsta sees, with indignation and surprise, a boat approaching the island, and catches up a boat-hook to drive the intruder back. To his amazement the boat drives full upon the beach, empty but for a book, which Mounsta securing discovers to be one of sorcery and the black art. While he is devouring this in the hope of finding within its pages some recipe by which he can transform his ugliness to beauty a handsome youth, apparelled with due magnificence, appears and snatches the book from Mounsta's hands. It is Prince Florian, who, possessed of a magic scarf which enables him by winding it round his head to become invisible, made good his landing in the boat which Mounsta had considered empty. Mounsta, after informing him that the isle is tenanted by ladies who have renounced the world and excluded from their society all men save him, leaves Florian for awhile, that he, Mounsta, may make some preparation for the unwelcome guest.

While Florian is meditating, Vavir enters with

her offering of flowers for the sundial, and addresses it in terms of love, unaware of the presence of the invisible prince. Florian, filled with wonder and amusement, is tempted to reply for the senseless dial, and heedlessly informs her that he is under the spell of enchantment and will be immured within the stone until a maiden shall have loved him in full constancy for a year and a day. Vavir has loved her dial for a year. She gives her heart to the mysterious vow and longs with all the innocence of such an artless nature for the morrow. From Hilda's own lips, as she addresses the fountain, he hears the story of her love for him and, this time in passionate earnestness, still invisible, replies to her as the Spirit of the Fountain. While the prince sleeps Mounsta steals the veil and makes his love known to Hilda when she next comes eagerly to renew her conversation to the wonderful fountain. She beseeches him to discover himself and promises to become his bride, dropping her ring into the fountain as a pledge of her faith and constancy. Mounsta after awhile discovers himself, and Hilda finds with horror that she has been tricked and deceived. The ring is on his finger—she cannot recall her pledge, but she coaxes the veil from him and, in a chant of marvellous beauty and force, tells him though she is his betrothed he shall never see her face again. As she winds the scarf about her head and becomes invisible Mounsta falls raving upon the stage.

Deprived of his veil, the Prince Florian is discovered by Vavir, to whom he is compelled to make full confession of his heedless folly and whose love he, loving Hilda, as gently as possible rejects. The shock is too cruel a one for the fragile flower, and Vavir is smitten for death. Mounsta, filled with remorse for what he has done, confesses his theft to Prince Florian, eager for the death which he expects at the prince's hand, but Florian, after a burst of furious indignation, suffers pity for the miserable wretch to predominate and bids him become unhurt. Hilda is still missing, and Vavir, who is dying fast at the foot of the dial, to which she has been carried, is in the greatest sorrow at the thought that she shall die without seeing her beloved sister again. Hilda appears and endeavours to stave off the impending doom by prevailing upon Florian to relinquish her and transfer his affections to her sister. This alone can save Vavir's life, and Florian, though he cannot cease to love Hilda, consents to the sacrifice that gentle Vavir may be saved. It is too late, however, for the noble denial of self to bear fruit. Vavir dies in her sister's arms, forgiving the heedless prince and thus rendering the sacrifice unnecessary.

As we have said, the play is a poem, and that of a very high order. It is scarcely too much to assert that there is not a weak line in it from first to last. The language flows on in one musical—and sometimes grandly musical—stream. That the play loses something from its passage from the study to the stage is certain, for, though the characters are as well embodied as it is possible for them to be in the present condition of the stage, it cannot be denied that they fall short of the ideal which the author has created.

As a proof of the extreme value and beauty of the work may be adduced the fact of its undoubted success as an acting play, for were the representation even only fairly given it would lack in dramatic interest and fail to catch the interest of audiences unaccustomed to such delicate and subtle power.

Take the idea in all its bare idealities; here are a number of beautiful women, who have forsworn the love of man, making love, and that in the most unequivocal language, to mirrors, dials and fountains! At first sight the idea appears absurd, overdrawn and morbid. But the poet extends his wand and touches it, and, lo, the thing is done! We understand it all now, and our sympathies go out towards the fair Hilda and Vavir as if dials, trees and fountains were the proper, orthodox objects of fair women's love.

As Hilda, Mrs. Kendal looks exquisitely and plays with all that subtle charm for which she is famous. Nothing could be finer than the serenity with which she endues the character in the first scene, and there has not often been anything more impressive than the outburst with which she receives and punishes Mounsta after her discovery of his treachery, and her pathetic, heart-strung appeal to Florian in the succeeding scenes.

If we were inclined to be hypercritical we should take exceptions to the manner in which she makes known the shock of Vavir's death. The shriek—a natural one under a similar event, occurring under ordinary conditions—is here, where all is idealism, a piece of unnatural realism. This is as false, we take it, to the spirit of the whole work as if Mounsta had been discovered in the first scene pumping water with a real bucket out of a real pump. With this single exception we have nothing but the keenest ad-

miration for Mrs. Kendal's embodiment of the Lady Hilda, and remembering her as we do in the former fairy plays of the same author, we must pronounce her present performance an advance upon her former ones, excellent though they were. Miss Hollingshead, as Lady Vavir, wins the sympathies of the audience and secures their interest at the first six lines of her part, and retains that interest and sympathy until the fall of the curtain. Her delivery is rather forced and slightly monotonous, but it does not jar with the idea one forms of the character, and renders her every word distinct and effective.

If we were to instance any part of her effective rendering of the character we should feel tempted to speak of her reception of Florian's confession and plea for forgiveness in the second act. The facial expression, the droop of the body, the upward gaze of the widespread eyes were evidences of promise which will blossom, under favourable conditions, to precious fruit.

The Prince Florian of Mr. Kendal is an equal and fair performance of a character which is subordinate to the leading idea—that of the self-sacrifice of a noble and tender-hearted woman, and he looks and acts the prince to perfection.

For Mr. G. W. Anson's Mounsta must be reserved that special word of praise which it has been of late happily the duty of the critic to bestow on recent plays and players. Mr. Anson plays with the taste and feeling of a true artist, and we do not hesitate to say that there has not been for some time so powerful a piece of acting as that which he displays in the character of the miserable dwarf who is cursed with the heart of a man and the form of a satyr. There is a force in his assumption without extravagance, and a delicacy of pathos which evidences the care and sympathy which the actor has bestowed upon his creation.

To enumerate the excellencies of the performance one would require the pen of a Haalitt, and to give examples would necessitate a comprehensive review of the whole of that part of the play in which Mounsta takes part. We must, however, speak, though briefly, of the scene in which he reveals his love to Hilda behind the magic veil. His voice became as soft and musical as Prince Florian's, while there ran through it and lingered about it a melancholy, indescribable wistfulness and pathos which went direct to the heart. His exhibition of passionate remorse and grief at Hilda's disappearance on gaining possession of the veil was another instance of his power in really tragical and emotional situations. The confession to Florian and the curses with which he tempts the infuriated prince to wreak his vengeance was yet another instance of the same power, and the "I thank you kindly, sir," with which he on one occasion leaves the stage was a delicate touch of the art which displays emotion rather by an effort at suppression than an outburst. Altogether, in fact, it is a fine performance and one which no one who has the interest of the drama at heart should fail to see and enjoy.

The reception of "Broken Hearts" was a most enthusiastic one and there is every possibility of the play running for a considerable period, notwithstanding the fear which some critics have expressed that the play is over the heads of the people. Shakespeare has never been over the heads of the people, and until the arrival of the wondrous individual who is to outline our constellation there will be no credence for the croak which we hear expressed at the production of every play a little higher in character than the sensational drama.

Under Mr. Haro's management the Court promises to be a pecuniary success. He has, by the careful manner in which he has produced Mr. W. S. Gilbert's dramatic poem, gone far to deserve it.

"Broken Hearts" will shortly, we are given to understand, be published in book form. When it appears it will be seen how valuable a contribution to the literature of the period is Mr. W. S. Gilbert's last fairy play.

SCIENCE.

NEW MODE OF ILLUMINATION FOR LIGHTHOUSES.—Professor Batestieri, of Naples, proposes for this purpose an apparatus composed of several discs of polished silver or copper, so arranged as to transmit successively the light received, so that all the rays falling upon the discs are concentrated into one powerful beam. The invention resembles the system of Fresnel, but the latter utilizes only about one-third the light received, while M. Batestieri's device, it is said, utilizes the greater portion. With an oil lamp having a burner 2·7 inches in diameter, at a test of the above described apparatus, a beam of light was transmitted which enabled a newspaper printed in

ordinary type to be read at the distance of 0.6 of a mile.

A DISCOVERY IN ELECTRICITY.—Several years ago it was accidentally discovered that when the contact of an electric current which magnetized a large electro-magnet was broken very near one of the poles of the electro-magnet the spark was so much increased in intensity as to produce a powerful snap, like that of a small pistol; while the breaking of the contact at a distance from the electro-magnet produced by no means such effect. The next thing observed was the drawing of sparks from the iron electro-magnet, or from its armature; but neither of these phenomena led any investigator to search out their origin, or to try to find what further results of the same class could be obtained. This appears to have been done at last by Mr. Edison, of Newark, well known among electricians for several valuable inventions relating to electric telegraphy. He investigated the nature of the spark which could be obtained from the iron core of the electro-magnet, which, according to his statement, recently published, does not manifest the ordinary properties of electricity. The galvanometer is unmoved, the delicate gold leaf electrometer exhibits no signs of deflection, a Leyden jar is not charged by it, etc. But we consider the conclusion that this manifestation shows the existence of a new force to be rather hasty.

THE ISLAND MYSTERY.

CHAPTER VI.

The smile faded off the girl's face instantaneously. She ran into the little house, and returned in a moment with a glass of wine, which she held to his lips.

He drank a few swallows, and then mounted upon the threshold, and painfully and slowly gained a lounge near the door of the little room into which she ushered him.

"Oh, if Majorie were only here—she is so skilled in healing! Can you bear to have me remove your foot? I am sure it ought to be done."

"Yes, indeed—it seems as if that would be instantaneous relief. Cut it, if you can."

She found a sharp knife of her father's and, though the delicately pencilled eyebrows were contracted in painful sympathy, she went through the task.

The limb was frightfully swollen. She shuddered when she saw it, and went away at once for bandage and water.

As the coolness of the water slowly dripped along the burning limb Mark uttered a thankful exclamation.

"Ah, blessed water! how countless are the favours you bestow upon us!" ejaculated he.

His fair nurse administered to the relief copiously. "I am a poor leech," said she, "but I should say no bones are broken."

"A dislocation, then? for I cannot make the first attempt at standing. Ah, but the water works magically. I do not mind the pain now. I shall do famously."

He was bolstered up with cushions, and he glanced around him curiously, now that his mind was not absorbed by his sufferings.

It held rustic furniture, and very primitively fashioned were the walls, but the room had a refined air, a pretty look, which even a fastidious eye must recognize.

The walls were not papered, but hung with chints of a tiny pattern, a sort of stone-coloured ground, with a meandering spray of rosebuds. These curtains not only gave a cool, graceful appearance to the apartment but covered the little closets and shelves along the sides from observation. A tiny stove occupied a little alcove, and its utensils were carefully put away in the great chest beyond. A bookcase well filled, a few statuettes, one fine engraving, and an endless variety of flowers dextrously disposed, lent an effect many and many a richly furnished drawing-room might have envied.

Mark's eye came back again to the graceful figure and lovely face of the youthful mistress, and spoke his thoughts aloud.

"You said rightly—it is far more like an oriole's nest than a hermit's cave, or a wizard's hut. But who would ever mistrusted our island held such a little paradise?"

She smiled gaily and pointed to the windows.

One was free from blind or shutter, and looked into the little circular garden; the other had a wooden shutter only, no glass at all, except three or four round apertures not more than an inch in diameter, with a magnifying-glass fitted into them.

She swung the latter wide open, and carefully wheeled the lounge to it.

"There," exclaimed she, triumphantly, "see what a prospect the Oriole has! Here she knows what is passing beneath, while none mistrust that her little nest is perched to command every movement."

It was as she said. The windows commanded the beach, the reef, the broad sweep of the sea, and the narrow path leading along the rocks to the islands.

Mark saw his own boat, a little speck, moored still as he had left it. He had noticed the magnifying-glass in the shutter.

The mystery was solved for him how she had recognized him at once without coming into his presence.

He understood also the use of that great mirror mounted upon a stand with castors, to move it before the window.

He only admired the simplicity of the arrangements, and their ingenious results, no longer marvelling at the wizard's reputation among the simple country folks.

"It is a charming spot, and as romantic as secluded. It would be perfect if its mistress never grew weary of loneliness," said Mark, gazing questioningly into the girl's face.

Her eyes suddenly filled with tears.

"Ah," said she, "how should you, a stranger, guess so speedily what my father has never mistrusted?"

"Concerning what?" asked Mark, gently.

"You know before you question," answered she, with vehemence, "that I am pining for companionship and sympathy from some one of my own age. Oh, how blessed to have a sister, a brother!"

The same wistful grief he had seen in the haunted spring shadowed her face once more.

"Well," said he, "the spell of loneliness is broken at last. It shall not be my fault if it be resumed."

She was still standing with downcast eyes.

"And I do not know the name of the gentle mistress of the Nest," pursued Mark; "tell me so much at least before your father comes?"

She raised her hand, and looked into his face with a truthful smile.

"I told you long ago; I am Oriole."

"What! is that your name? how charming! You could not find a more appropriate one I am sure. With that slender figure, that white throat, and golden-brown sweep of tresses—yes, indeed, I see that you are Oriole."

He did not add what he longed to say:

"Come sweet-voiced one, fold those restless wings upon my breast; be the oriole of my home and heart."

Yet I will not aver his eloquent eyes did not reveal the inner thought.

Oriole blushed and looked down, as shy and startled as her namesake, supposing Mark and his gun had appeared in view of the swinging nest.

Suddenly, however, she turned her head and listened.

"My father is coming; tell me your name that I may give it to him."

"Mark Shenstone," answered the youth, readily.

"What, from the great house—from the Manor? you cannot mean it!"

"I am Serle Shenstone's son," replied Mark, somewhat dismayed by the swift look of consternation on her face. "I hope there is nothing in that fact to disturb you."

She stood vibrating on the threshold, and answered hastily, although the uneasy look did not leave her face:

"Not for me, certainly."

But as she closed the door and went out to the secret gateway she murmured:

"It will add to my perplexity, for though I know not wherefore, I am sure by father bears the Shenstones no good-will. I would not have the poor youth guess how frightened I am. For my father has laid such stress on my remaining unseen that I dread to tell him what I have done."

As the last words trembled on her lips the hedged gateway unclosed and the wizard entered.

She ran to meet him the more eagerly for her momentary fears.

"Oh, my father, you were so long away, and I have wanted you so much!"

"What for, my sweet, my pet, my birdling? Could not you stay quiet in the Nest, with all your books, and flowers, and work? What would you have of the old wizard father?"

"Ever so much; and I have really needed you. Listen to me, dear father."

"Well, come into the house, and sit in your place on my knee, and I will hear it all."

"No, no."

And the little white hands hanging to his arm held him back.

"Not there; but here—there is a visitor in the house, my father."

"Oriole, child, what mean you?"

"It is a poor youth who came hunting on the island. He was climbing by the precipice and he fell, and his foot caught in a vine; and there he hung, his head downward, and could not stir an inch to help himself. I saw him. Oh, father, dear, it was so frightful, and he seemed so noble and gallant I could not help giving him what aid I could."

The broad forehead of the wizard had been darkening.

"Rash child, what could you do?"

"I help him with my scarf, and somehow we got up the brow of the hill and—"

She paused, the sweet eyes dropping, the cheek flushed hotly.

"Go on child. Why do you hesitate, Oriole?"

"Because I am afraid of your anger—oh, my father. And why should I be? it was but an act of humanity; it would have haunted me always had I turned away without helping him. He was suffering terribly—oh, he was so frightfully pale, and he tried so hard to smother the groans so as not to frighten me. And I took him to the Nest, father; and he is there now, with a broken ankle, I fear. But he has promised not to reveal its presence, nor my being with you, and I know he will keep it. I would answer for him with my life."

"You stake strongly upon a day's acquaintance," said the wizard. "So the sportsman has found out the Oriole's Nest. It is a sad mischance. Very much I fear I shall rue the day; but don't tremble so my child, I shall not be wroth with you. Does the injured youth belong near us?"

(To be continued.)

SKILLED LABOUR.

THE richest mines of wealth of a nation are its workshops, its factories, and its farms, filled with men of highly trained and skilled labour, it being a universal law that the world's great prizes go to the best. This is not simply an abstract question, but one affecting us all in our prosperity and success every day and every hour of the day, and every day in the year. France, Switzerland, Prussia and Germany have laid us, and are laying us, every year under contributions of millions for very superior workmanship, taste and skill. Their silks, their laces, their cloths, their china and porcelain, their bronzes, their fabrics in metal and wood, and their objects of vertu and art could be largely produced in this country if we had developed and educated our artisans and mechanics up to the same perfection in workmanship that they have in those countries.

Their mode of thorough instruction in their workshops and manufacturing establishments produces men of the highest order of training, ability and skill. If we take, as an example, the small State of Wurtemberg, in Germany, with a population of 1,778,000, we find that they have forty-nine industrial and technical schools for the training of boys and educating them in all the industrial arts. In these schools there is a mercantile and commercial course, and one for the application of chemistry to the chemical arts and manufactures, where there are fifty-one professors and teachers of chemical and physical mineralogy, modelling rooms, mechanical workshops, rooms for drawing, botanical garden and astronomical observatory. There are other schools for building instruction and tradesmen, where builders are trained for masters and constructors of public works, etc., and plasterers, carpenters, grainers, painters, smiths, etc., are educated for foremen and masters; and the schools are crowded with those for whom they were intended, while the graduates are eagerly sought everywhere on the Continent for their superior excellence.

There are also schools for education in all agricultural pursuits, in which practice is combined with theory, they having under their care four hundred square miles of territory. These schools are largely attended, for in one year 12,040 persons, in 523 places, were getting a thorough, complete and practical agricultural education. Connected with these schools are institutions for practical training in anatomy, physiology and diseases of animals; and a smithy is attached, in which 4,000 animals were shod per year.

As the result of the recent trial of the 81-ton gun and the electric appliances at the Royal Arsenal Woolwich, for ascertaining the velocity of shot and the pressure of the gunpowder, it is believed that before long there will be a special powder, as well as a special shot for every kind of gun in Her Majesty's service.

Pigeons were found in ancient Egypt in the cul-

divated districts. There is a picture on one of the tombs, and another in the British Museum, where geese, quail and evidently ducks are being salted and preserved for future use. Pigeons both wild and domesticated, have been plentiful in Egypt from very early times. The common rock pigeon (*C. livia*) is generally distributed, and its compeer of the dove-cot often returns to the rocky wilds. Every town of any pretensions has a public pigeon-house, more on account of the economic value of the manure than for the birds. At Sicot it is a lively scene to sit in your boat and watch them swarming about the houses and settling on the tops of palm-trees, or, like sea-culls, hovering over the river for the purpose of picking up refuse thrown overboard.

HE LOVES ME: HE LOVES ME NOT.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Maurice Durant," "Fickle Fortune," "The Gipsy Peer," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXXVII

THOSE English voices seemed to strike familiarly upon his ear.

Terence was on the alert in a moment. From his position he could not see the faces of the speakers, but he could hear every word by bending close to the edges of the stair coping, and he very cautiously did.

Who knew? Perhaps he might hear something of Lord Ellsmere or Valeria Temple.

At the next word which rose to his ears he very nearly leapt upright.

The woman was speaking, and the voice was that of Selina Armitage!

For the moment he thought he was dreaming, then, as the woman continued, and the soft, fluent tone came up to him, he knew that he was not mistaken and with feverish excitement he bent down and drank in every word.

"Yes, I am late," said Selina Armitage, "I have been kept, there is danger for me now. Do not let us lose time. What have you learnt?"

"There's no such hurry," said Lord Ellsmere, half-sullenly, and the blood ran still more feverishly through Terry's veins as he recognised the voice, "you need not to be in such a terrific haste; well, well, keep your feet quiet, you have not forgotten some of the old habits! That horrid lasso, how I remember it; there's still some of the old temper in you, Sel."

"More than you imagine, more than you will welcome, so do not raise it," retorted Selina. "Quick, I say; there is no time for lamenta or recrimination. What have you learnt of her?"

"Something—I'll tell you directly; do you tell me something of England. How did you get on?"

"Coward?" hissed Selina, "how can you ask me, knowing that you left me penniless and mangled in a net which your debts had woven for me? What cared you what became of me? Nothing until now—now that you think I may be of use to you! Lord Ellsmere, you disgrace the name of man!"

"Softly, my dear girl," said Lord Ellsmere, half-angrily, half-smotheringly. "I did care for you, I always liked you as—as a sister, by Jove! When I look at you I wonder I did not learn to entertain a warmer feeling. Selina, you are a beautiful woman! I never knew it, saw it before, but jealousy has opened my eyes, and I am more than half-inclined to quarrel with Mr. Raven."

"Hush, idiot!" returned Selina, "no names! Cease your sarcasm; it is too false, too weak to deceive me. You care for me! Do not waste time—we hated each other from the first moment we met, I hate you still. Enough. What have you learnt?"

Lord Ellsmere remained silent for a moment, then he said, in a lower voice:

"I have found her!"

"Ah!" breathed Selina Armitage, with deep, malignant satisfaction.

"Yes, I have found her; but the game is over and we must throw up our hands."

"Why?"

"They are living in the house near the Church of the Apostles; she has been ill, nearly dead—not quite, worse luck for me—and the doctor has ordered her to leave Italy at once. They go, Madame Le—"

"Hush, no names, I say!" interrupted Selina Armitage, warningly.

"Well, well, who is to hear us?" muttered Lord Ellsmere, angrily. "They leave Venice to-morrow! to-morrow! There is no time to plan anything. They will be in England in no time, and then—"

Selina Armitage uttered a scornful laugh.

"Oh, what a satire it is to call men the lords of

the creation!" she exclaimed, bitterly. "The game lost! Don't you see that this move gives all to our hands? She leaves Venice to-morrow—for where?"

"England, I suppose!" retorted Lord Ellsmere.

"No, to an Austrian state prison!" retorted Selina Armitage, with an air of vindictive confidence.

"What!" exclaimed Lord Ellsmere.

"Listen! What time does she start?"

"At sunset."

"Good! You know the way they will take?"

"The usual way; there is no other."

"Good again! They go alone?"

"Alone; who is there to accompany them?"

"They go alone, you know the hour and the direction they will take. As she is living and travelling under an assumed name, and as I know that she has reason for moving secretly, they will leave the place quietly, mysteriously. With closed curtains to the gondola—maska perhaps."

Lord Ellsmere uttered an impatient exclamation.

"What has all that to do with it? I tell you, whether they sneak out like shadows or leave the place, accompanied by a guard of honour, they go to-morrow, out of our grasp."

"Not quite," said Selina Armitage. "Not at all; if you will listen patiently to my plan and carry it out to the end. Now, they go in the manner I have suggested; it is suspicious, full of mystery, it can be made to look more so. They will never leave Venice!"

"Pshaw! Who can prevent them?"

"The police!"

"The police?" echoed Lord Ellsmere.

"Ay, to-night—this afternoon you will go to the Bureau and see one of the detectives. Tell him that you have reason to expect that a famous conspirator, a titled lady, who has been plotting against the government for some months past, will leave Venice to-morrow, and arrange for her capture."

Lord Ellsmere gave vent to a low whistle of admiration. Suddenly it died away, and his face dropped.

"No, no; that will not do. I shall compromise myself, and, as you know, that is not safe; besides, an explanation would ensue a moment after the event and there would be a collapse of your scheme and an exposure of ourselves."

"No, there would not. You know or should know better than I, seeing that you have been here longer, that Italy is unsettled, Venice full of patriots and conspirators, and the government uneasy and greatly anxious to arrest any doubtful persons; to effect their arrest and put an end to the conspiracies they would employ any means—under-handed if necessary. For the Bureau, represent yourself as an Englishman travelling for pleasure, and therefore desirous of keeping your name out of the affair. Represent that you have discovered this plot and this lady-conspirator by accident, and make them promise to keep you behind the scenes on condition of the information. They will do it; they would do anything, as I say, to crush the patriots. Tell them you want no reward, that you require only that your name shall not transpire. They will agree; and then undertake to tell them where the arrest may be made, under another condition, and that is, that they convey their prisoner to Vienna without acquainting her with the facts of the case. Once in Vienna, she is safe and out of the way."

"How? how?" asked Lord Ellsmere, eagerly.

"This way," said Selina Armitage, with a malignant smile. "Do you not know that once the Austrians get a conspirator in their hands they never lose their hold of him? Evidence or no evidence, he is lost to the world! Imprisonment for life is the penalty if there be little evidence; death if there be full an excuse or show of justice! Evidence must be forthcoming. The plot is easy. Say that you overheard a conspiracy against the archduke, that this woman has attempted to bribe a man to the crime of assassination; produce the man—it is an easy matter to bribe a purger, these Italians are used to such work—"

"I have a man to my hand," muttered Lord Ellsmere. "Slodger will do it. He has brains enough!"

"Any one could do it!" retorted Selina, scornfully. "Let him learn his lesson well, and say as little as possible, a word almost will be sufficient to convict her, and then—"

And she drew a long breath.

Lord Ellsmere took a few steps up and down, meditating deeply.

"You think the plan will succeed?"

"I do not doubt it. If you think there is a chance of failure, make another arrest. This time no sham one. Give the name of one Doctor Antonio and tell the police that he may be found any afternoon at four o'clock quitting the Palace of the Doges!"

"Ah!" ejaculated Lord Ellsmere, with a smile.

"Your face tells me that he is in your way, Selina!"

"He is—I fear him!" she breathed. "Yes; let him go! He has been suspected for some time, and I knew from his own lips that he is a conspirator and plotter against the government. The police have only been waiting for an opportunity; your accusation will give it to them. He and she have been seen together—"

"He is the doctor of Edgar Raven!" said Lord Ellsmere. "I see—I see! Clever, clever! and beautiful! Do you really love that proud artist fellow?"

"Love him!" she echoed; then, with a scornful gesture, turned aside. "How can you understand? You never loved in your life—save yourself! Love him! I would die for him, ay, die for him! Enough of that! You are right in thinking that I would be rid of this meddling doctor; he who jeopardises my position; he alone could answer any questions, and undo Edgar Raven. Enough, enough; I cannot talk of it. I would strike from my path all who stood between me and the man I love; and the hand that hurts him hurts me! I have got work to do, dark work my heart throbbs for! I have yet to discover whose dastardly hand struck the blow which laid him low, ah, nearly as low as death. I am patient, but I shall learn in time, and, when I do, sooner or later vengeance shall be mine!"

Her voice grew lower and lower until it nearly lost itself in far-frenzied intensity.

Terence shuddered as he heard the deadly threat which the words implied.

Lord Ellsmere laughed a low, uneasy laugh.

"So you'd like to know who did it, eh?"

"Ah, you know!"

"No," he replied, carefully, "or I'd tell you, never fear! I like to see you in this spirit; it becomes you! No, how should I know? He got this ugly inch of lead in some drunken quarrel."

"False, and you know it! Edgar Raven does not mix in drunken brawls."

"Then in some love quarrel!" said Lord Ellsmere, with a sneer. "You'll admit he goes in for that?"

There was a moment's silence. Then from the clenched teeth came the retort.

"Don't tempt me to indulge my hate for you! I could crush you, and I long to do it. Don't tempt me! I say, sooner or later I shall learn, and then let him who did it beware! And now all is complete. With the barrier to wealth and position cast down, you will step into the Ellsmere estates, and be a grand lord of the county. You will not want to remember old times and old acquaintances. I charge you to forget, for should we ever meet and you dared to recognise me, or should you ever by word or letter seek to relink the chain which is broken, I will cast all to the winds and denounce you. Best beware! From this hour we are as if we had never met. You go your way, to rank and wealth; I go mine, to that destiny which my own hands shall carve out for me! Farewell!"

And she turned to go.

"Stop!" said Lord Ellsmere, in an agitated voice. "Selina, we must not part like this! You don't mean that. We were never more than sister and brother to each other, and I sometimes treated you rudely, roughly, as brothers will; but—but I see my mistake now; you were always a good friend to me and faithful to my interests! Why should we part now? I feel as if I could not do without you, Selina. As you say, I am on the road to wealth and position—walk with me—be Countess of Ellsmere!"

He held out his hand as he spoke and his face flushed eagerly. In one moment, as it were, he had learned to love the woman whom he had for years despised and insulted.

Selina Armitage turned her head and looked at him, and his face paled; his eyes quailed beneath the look of scorn in hers.

"I am avenged for years of misery!" she breathed.

"Avenged," Lord Ellsmere, you ask me to be your wife! See how I treat your offer! I would sooner lie at the bottom of that river than be wife of yours! Your wife! I have been your slave too long! I hate, I loathe, I scorn you! I fling your offer in your teeth, as I would that of a leper."

"Don't grieve me, don't push me too far," he hissed. "Suppose I say you shall be mine! Ah!" he fell back with his vacant unfinished; for from her bosom had darted a fount of glittering steel, which was within an inch of his breast.

"You should not even utter a prayer!" she breathed fiercely. "From this moment we part—tyrant and slave—from this moment the chain is broken; never to be rejoined. Do your work, and take your reward; you will never exchange another word with Selina Armitage," and, dropping the stiletto into its sheath again, she glided, like a beautiful snake, from his reach.

Lord Ellsmere made a stride forward, as if he

would have followed her, then stopped short, and, after a deep out of disappointment, turned on his heel and strode off in the opposite direction.

Terry remained for a few minutes quite motionless, then, he started to his feet, all aglow with anticipation of victory.

By a wonderful chance he had not only caught a scent of the game which he had so patiently sought, he had been placed in a position to carry out the whole of his purpose in a more complete fashion than he could possibly have hoped.

The first thing for him to do was to find the Church of the Twelve Apostles, and without a moment's delay he ran down the steps and made his inquiries.

The church was situated at the other end of the city and Terry, jumping into a gondola, had himself conveyed thither, alighting with the red-back guide-book, which gave him the appearance of an ordinary English tourist.

Terry waited a few minutes until the gondolier had pocketed his fare and pushed away, then sought the third house and boldly inquired of the porter for a lady named Valeria Temple.

The porter shook his head.

Terry, thinking that he had not made himself understood in his broken and imperfect Italian, spelled the name.

Still the man shook his head.

"There was no lady staying in the house of that name."

Terry, in despair, then set to work to describe Valeria, and, while he was doing it, went to the bewilderment of the honest porter, Madame Leciare passed up the stairs.

Terence came off suddenly and immediately followed her, looking at a clock.

Madame Leciare passed on the third landing, and unlocking a door opened into the apartment. Before she could close it Terence, who was prepared for desperate measures, came in and shut the door in after her and, looking out his head, continued in a low voice:

"How do you do, Madame Leciare?"

Madame Leciare suppressed a cry of astonishment, and then, on her guard, bowed coldly.

"Mr. —"

"Vane, Terence Vane," said Terry, quietly. "I am so glad to see you. Is Miss Temple at home?"

Madame Leciare hesitated, she had received her instructions to deny Valeria to every one, no matter whom.

"Miss Temple is not," she said, coldly.

"Not within?" said Terry. "Where is she?"

"I must see her!"

"She—she has left Venice," gasped Madame Leciare, who was not used to seeing her and did it badly.

"Left Venice? Are you sure?" said Terence, earnestly.

"Most sure," said Madame Leciare. "What do you want with her, Mr. Vane? If I can forward any message—"

At that moment a lady glided into the room, and Terence uttered an exclamation of satisfaction and darted past the alarmed Madame.

"Miss Temple!" he said, holding out his hand. "I am so glad I was not quite deceived! I am so glad I saw you!"

Valeria, who had started and turned pale, smiled and held out her hand. She was very pale and her face bore traces of the illness which Lord Ellsmere had spoken.

"And you?" she said. "I am very surprised! I did not know that any one in Venice knew my name. I—"

she paused and sank down into a chair.

Terence glanced at Madame Leciare.

"I have something of the greatest importance to say to you," he said, in a low voice. "Can I speak before Madame Leciare?"

"You may say anything before her," said Valeria, in a low voice, and trembling visibly. "You have brought bad news, Mr. Vane?"

"No—o," said Terence, "but information which is of vast consequence to you both. Oh, Miss Temple, how ill you look!—I am afraid—but there, this is a time for acting, not words! You remember me?"

Valeria inclined her head.

"I have come over to Venice to seek you!" said Terry, in a low voice, which he strove to render careless and light-hearted. "I have been nearly over Italy and I discovered your whereabouts this morning by the merest accident."

Valeria, who had recovered something of her self-possession by this time, smiled.

Valeria turned her face to him, pale and startled.

"And I have seen the portrait of Lady Ellsmere. Need I say more?"

"No," said Valeria. "You know all."

"Not quite," said Terry; "but I know enough to be able to assist you, Lady Florio."

"No," said Valeria, laying her hand on his; "Valeria Temple still!"

"Miss Temple, while you remain here in Venice your life is in danger!"

She smiled sadly.

"You do not alarm me; we leave to-morrow," she said, with a sigh.

"Yes, yes, I know," he said, "at sunset, by water. I know it, and so does your enemy, so will the police to-night, perhaps, and they will arrest you to-morrow as conspirator and patriot."

Valeria looked at his eager, boyish face with dull surprise.

"You will be arrested and conveyed to Austria, there imprisoned and kept out of the way to allow your enemy to work his will."

"And that enemy is—"

"Lord Ellsmere," said Terry.

"Lord Ellsmere, Lord Ellsmere!" said Valeria, with astonishment. "Is he here?"

"Ay, and has been here for some time," said Terry. "Oh! my dear lady, do warn yourself. Your sympathy and indifference to your own safety distress me more than I can say. If you do not save yourself you will fall into the hands of those two hounds—"

"Those two—whom?" asked Valeria. "What two?"

"Lord Ellsmere and Selina Armitage."

Valeria sprang to her feet, her gloomiest face flushed, her eyes aflame.

"There was no need to complain of her spying now! I know her too."

"She is in Venice, and is acting and abetting Lord Ellsmere in a plot whereby he intends obtaining possession of your estate. There is no doubt about it, for I overheard the conversation of the two on the night—"

"Miss Temple, I saw by your changed face that you will forgive this villainous plot and discountenance it."

"Selina Armitage," said Valeria, with a long breath, "concocting a plot with Lord Ellsmere. Why should she? Ah! I see it all, and over her pale face there spread a crimson stain."

"She had been deceived—but by whom?"

"There is no time to lose," said Terence; "to-morrow, as I say, you will be accused to the police and be arrested. Had you any knowledge of this before?"

"No," said Valeria; "I know only that Selina Armitage was here in Venice. Do you know," she hesitated so she could scarcely speak the words, "that she is betrothed to Edgar Raven?"

Terry nodded.

"That is the strangest part of it to me," he said. "She is scarcely the woman to deceive a man like Edgar Raven; he is not a vain, unsophisticated boy,"

her added, hastily, and with a flush of shame.

Valeria sighed.

"Strange as it seems it is true."

"Is it not possible that he may have been deceived?" suggested Terry.

Valeria shook her head and turned her pale, proud face away.

"Let us talk of something else," she said, "of yourself. I have not thanked you yet. How came you to make this journey on my behalf? You say that you saw my portrait at the Castle, and that you learned my real identity?"

"It is too long a story," said Terry, hurriedly. "Be assured that I did not pry into your affairs from a vulgar curiosity. Do you remember a certain little girl—a pretty, bright-eyed being, with a heart as pure and beautiful as her face—called Elfy?"

Valeria's face expressed her astonishment.

"Elfy, the costumer's daughter? Mr. Vane, you know more than I gave you credit for. And she has told you?"

"She has told me nothing," said Terence. "I have conjectured only. But it was she who bade me seek and find you. Madame, if you owe gratitude or thanks to any one—and I do not think you do—it is to her."

Valeria's face flushed.

"Then I am yours," he said, "to command to the death. Never fear, all will come right and I'll land you in England and have you safe in Ellsmere Castle before the month's out. Now one word more before I go. Don't be astonished at anything that may happen. I may come to you in some strange disguise. You may know me by this ring." And he slipped from his finger a ring which had been his mother's. Then, replacing it, he said: "For the present, adieu. I shall soon return and will make my plot plain. I need scarcely add that you must admit no one until I return."

"I will obey you in everything," said Valeria, catching a spark of life from the vigour and vivacity of her generous protector, and Terry, with another smile of encouragement, departed.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

FOR some hours did Valeria and Madame Leciare discuss the startling intelligence which handsome Terry Vane had brought, and the discussion brought a touch of excitement to the apathy which Madame Leciare feared would compass Valeria's whole life.

Valeria, during the conversation, carefully concealed her own identity, and Madame Leciare was still in ignorance of the nobility and rank of her friend.

Valeria had dropped the title so long that she had grown to consider it a thing apart, and unusual. And still she retained her to her rank, her castle, her wealth, if that which she had valued above them all was still kept from her—the heart of Edgar Raven.

To her, still dwelling on the bitterness of the idea that Selina Armitage was his betrothed, it seemed a very little thing to be cast into prison or to suffer death.

Her life had been a misery and entanglement from the first.

But one thought alone moved her to make the effort for which Terence offered her—she could thank the woman who had robbed her of all she held most dear and procure the recovery of that self-will, Horace Ellsmere.

While she was still thinking and endeavouring to solve the problem of Terence's appearance and the plot which he had discovered a servant entered and told her that a monk wished to see her.

"A monk!" she said. "I can see no one. I know no monk."

The servant departed, but presently returned and laid a ring on the table.

"The holy father says that this ring is his passport."

Valeria started. The ring was Terence Vane's. "Admit him," she said, concealing her surprise as best she could; and presently a monk, dressed in a long, coarse habit and with his cowl drawn over his face, entered.

Throwing back the cowl directly the servant had left the room, Terence exclaimed:

"A good disguise, do you think? It was the best I could find, and one that procures a man respect. The women courted and the men doffed their hats as I passed. See, I have made some progress in my plot."

And, unfastening his girdle, he slipped off the habit and discovered another one in its place; this he also removed and there still remained a complete habit, cowl and girdle and all.

Valeria could not repress a smile, and Terence was rejoiced to see it.

"Now," he said, cheerily, "here is the material for three good Franciscan brothers, for in Venice it seems that this cowl does make the monks. Take all these to your room at once and encoast them."

Valeria, all obedience, took up the habits and soon returned.

"They are quite concealed," she said, "for I have put them under the bed-covering."

"A capital place," said Terry. "And now for our plans. To-morrow you will keep the house all day. On no account attempt to leave it, for the police, who will watch the house, will arrest you without waiting until the evening. At sunset I will bring two young girls here, whom I have deceived into thinking that match a love affair, in the habits of Franciscan nuns. They are quite ready for a little fun, and I have ascertained that there will be no danger—be it said, they are quite ready to brave that if they can annoy the police. We three shall come in the habits and the two girls will leave here in your dresses and enter the gondola. The rest is child's play."

Valeria held out her hand to him.

"How can I thank you?" she said.

"By showing some desire for your own safety," said Terence, in a whisper. "If I might promise I would say another word of encouragement and hope, but I will not—time will prove which is the mightiest, villainy or honesty. How can you depend on Madame Leciare?"



[THE ARREST.]

"As on my second self," said Valeria, instantly; then, in a low voice, she said:

"Mr. Vane, you will not think me needlessly fond of secrecy and concealment if I ask you to retain the fact of my being other than I seem in your confidence. She does not know that I am more than plain Valeria Temple, and I would not have her know till I get to England, then—"

"All shall be explained on both sides," said Terence, pressing her hand. "I understand; trust all to me. This secret is as safe as if the hand of death had sealed these lips. And now I must go again. Do not forget! Keep yourselves on guard and do not leave the house."

Valeria promised obedience, and the sham monk left the house slowly, telling his beads and looking gloomily downwards.

The night closed and the dawn broke.

The police were in possession of the information against the mysterious countess and her companion, the well-known Doctor Antonio.

All through the night Selina Armitage had tossed in the restless fever of a ferocious anticipation of triumph, and, through that triumph, safety.

Once let Valeria Temple and Dr. Antonio be removed from her path and she felt secure.

She felt in her own mind that she could win Edgar Raven's love, give her but fair play and time.

She could fully realize the value of her bewitching charm of smile and low-breathed whisper. She knew that no man was ever born that could withstand a woman if that woman were beautiful and bent on his conquest.

"He shall love me!" she wailed, tossing her wealth of golden hair from its pillow. "He shall love me, for I will make him! I will watch by him, see that not a wish remains ungratified, not a desire unfulfilled! I will tend him as never sultan was tended yet by the veriest slave of the harem. I will grow into his heart so that the image of that other woman shall be effaced, and I will bind his life to mine until he is mine, and mine alone! oh my love my love, Edgar, my love!"

This was the burden of the passionate, desperate woman's cry that night, and certainly it seemed as if fate were bending a kindly ear to her prayer. If her plot succeeded Valeria could meet Edgar Raven no more, and the story that she had told him could in the event of Doctor Antonio's capture, never be disclosed.

With the dawn she rose, pale and determined and, as was her wont, repaired soon after breakfast, of which she ate nothing, to the Palace of the Doges.

As she stood on the steps and looked back across

the canal she could see the spire of the Church of the Apostles rising amidst the rest, and she smiled scornfully.

"To-night, madam, you will be in a prison in a week, all well, I shall be in his arms, his wife."

As she entered the studio, she found Edgar Raven already at his work, a cigar in his mouth, his coffee untasted.

He greeted her with his usual courteous kiss and bent down to his canvas again.

Patient, meek, yet beautiful and daring, she stood by, full of dumb praise.

He turned and looked at her.

"You are pale this morning," he said. "Have you had a sleepless night?"

"No," she answered. "It is the crimson in your picture which makes it appear so. How exquisite it is! No wonder that you are glad to get back to work. What ambition, wealth, rank, love to a man who holds such power as yours!"

"Ambition, rank, wealth are nothing; but love!—I thank you for that word—love is everything."

And he took her hand and kissed it courteously.

Her face was red enough then and her heart beat fast.

A caress from him moved her as a harp is moved when a master hand sweeps across its strings.

All that morning he worked without ceasing, and she moved about the studio watching him, devouring him by stealth, and wondering how long it would be before she could win the smile back to his lips and the colour to his face.

The day drew to a close, and the sun made its first dip behind the towers of St. Marco.

Selina rose and passed on to the balcony.

"Mind the cold autumnal air," said Edgar.

"It will not harm me, dearest," she returned, looking down. "I like to see the people pass."

She was waiting for the gondola to pass which would bear the two doomed women; waiting for Doctor Antonio whom she had betrayed.

Just before the hour of sunset, three men loitered on to the street before the house near the Church of the Apostles and commenced a careless conversation.

They smoked cigarettes as they chatted and laughed carelessly.

Any one seeing them would have said that they were three friends who had met at a café and strolled out to stretch their legs.

They were, in reality, police officers, and under their coats they carried revolvers. They were watching the house opposite and waiting for their prey.

Presently, as they talked, three Franciscan monks walked moodily by them with their hands crossed and their eyes bent on the ground.

They passed the police officers with a sign and gravely ascended the steps to the suspected house.

"Three brothers have gone to confess the pretty birds whom we shall soon have in our nets," said one of the men.

The others laughed and joked.

"Very beautiful they say she is," said one of the officers. "These Italian patriots all are. I wish they'd be a little more civil; they hate us Austrians like poison, and it's little use loving only on one side."

There was another laugh which died away instantly as two ladies were seen to emerge from the doorway of the house and look around as if for a porter.

A gondola shot out of the dimness of the arch and the two ladies, without a word, stepped into it and were rowed away.

The three men exchanged glances and instantly made a signal to a gondolier, who all this time seemed to have been asleep in his boat near the landing.

"That's them, eh?" said he, also a police officer; "we could catch them in a hundred yards, could we not, but our orders were that the arrest should not take place near the Palace of the Doges, and so we must let them get past."

Accordingly the first gondola was allowed to shoot on ahead until the canal had twisted some little distance from the palace, then the pursuers gave the word to chase, and in a few minutes the police gondolier shouted out:

"Stop in the king's name!"

The first almost dropped his paddle in his alarm, and allowed the boat to swing towards the landing-place.

The police shot ahead of it, leapt ashore and sprang to their prey.

The curtains were dashed aside and a warrant thrust in, with these words:

"Surrender in the king's name!"

There was a shriek from the two women inside, the curtains were closed again, the police jumped on board, and the gondola, prisoners and all, was swiftly steered to the state prison.

Almost at the same moment there passed down the steps of the house near the Church of the Apostles three Franciscan monks, with their grave faces bent downwards and their sandalled feet carrying them noiselessly towards a gondola which stood waiting for them at a little distance.

(To be continued.)



[THE PROPOSAL REJECTED.]

THE BARONET'S SON; OR, LOVE AND HATE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Winifred Wynne," "One Sparkle of Gold," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XIX.

OSCAR VANDELUR stood in speechless astonishment and alarm as the harsh voice of his patron was heard pronouncing the ominous words:

"Mr. Vandeleur, what does all this mean?" He might well feel that a crisis had come—that he could no longer deceive him—nor, as it might be said, no longer hope to retain the irksome but necessary post that he held in the "risen man's" household.

And thus for a few brief moments there was a pause, while Mr. Bradley closed the door behind them, and, sitting down on the chair he usually occupied, pointed to one near him for the young man to take during the approaching conference.

Oscar at last recovered his self-possession so far as to reply, with a kind of desperate defiance:

"Mr. Bradley, I fully acknowledge your right to demand an account of my proceedings in your household, and that my return to it at this hour is a fair subject for your displeasure. But I decline to give any other reply to your question. So long as I do my duty in your family I am certainly a free agent in every other respect."

"Not quite, young man. We are none of us free agents," replied Mr. Bradley, clearing his throat. "We all depend on one another in this world, as you will find out when you are a little older. And, in this case, I should like to know what is to prevent my at once dismissing you from my employ, and also refusing any character whatever to a ruined and desperate spendthrift? Answer me that, sir," he continued, sternly.

Oscar could not but feel the urgent and hopeless ruin that stared him in the face if Mr. Bradley fulfilled his threat, and since that personage had evidently a more accurate intelligence than he had imagined as to his movements and position, it was certainly a natural, perhaps inevitable consequence that the dismissal should at once be hurled at his devoted head without more delay.

"Of course it is at your option, Mr. Bradley," he said, firmly. "I deny nothing, and I ask nothing at

your hands. I certainly will not complain, and as certainly I will not humble myself to plead with you for toleration and indulgence."

A peculiar smile that Oscar could not in the least comprehend passed over Mr. Bradley's features.

"Well, well, I like your spirit so far, and I am not at all inclined to be hard on a young fellow of your birth and position," he returned. "I daresay you think a man of my age, who has made his money by his own hard labour and thrift, would have no mercy in such a case as yours. But I have a sort of weakness for good birth, and I am inclined to pass over a great deal when it is as undoubted as yours."

Oscar literally stared to see whether the words were a mockery. He could scarcely have dreamed that the hard, vulgar, money-loving man before him would even have distinguished between a green-grocer's son and a baronet's, or cared which he had to deal with as an underling.

But there was no trace of jest or sarcasm on Mr. Bradley's broad, squat face, and, indeed, the expression was more of embarrassment and inquiry than of a mocking or angry resentment.

"You are very good, Mr. Bradley," he said, at last, "and I am truly obliged for your patience in what I know must exasperate your feelings, and which ought not to have occurred. And, if you are willing for me to remain as long as I can," he went on, with a bitter accent on the last words, "I promise to give you no cause, at any rate for scandal, in your own family. I shall do my duty here whatever idiotic folly I may commit elsewhere."

Mr. Bradley shook his head.

"That will not do," he replied. "I cannot consent to that, my young friend. In the first place, I do most strongly object to any such hours being kept, and any such desperate ruin going on, in any one forming part of my household. And, next, it would be simply impossible for you or any man to do your duty with such a fearful burden on his mind as you must feel," he went on, with a significant nod.

Oscar's lips did quiver a little now in spite of the desperate efforts he made at composure.

It was too plain that the "patron" knew most, if not all, of his position, and yet—and yet it was well nigh inexplicable that in such a case he should display such patient indulgence towards him.

"Very well, sir, I admit, the justice and propriety of your decision. I am ready to go at any moment," he said, with all the coolness he could command.

"Not so fast, young man; we must speak more plainly and come to some better understanding than this," said Mr. Bradley, coolly. "Now, as it

happens I am acquainted with at any rate thus much of your position, that you have plunged yourself in the most hopeless and insane difficulties, that you are involved in debt to a ruinous amount and that long before you ever can expect to be extricated from it in the ordinary course of such things you will be in jail or—"

"The grave," put in Oscar, bitterly. "So much the better."

"Well, many a one has hurried there before his time," returned Mr. Bradley, coolly, "who was not in such a desperate fix as yourself; but I don't see the necessity of dying any more than of living, as old Sherry has it, and it were a pity such good prospects as yours should be blighted so early. What would you say if a friend came forward and offered to set you straight on certain conditions?"

A flash of radiant yet incredulous delight crossed the pale, despairing features of the baronet's son.

The name that was dearest to his heart was ever first on his lips, and "Edith, dear Edith" was mentally breathed ere he replied:

"There can be little question of what I should feel in such a case, Mr. Bradley; but of course it must partly depend on the possibility of the conditions to which you allude."

"Oh, as to that, they are perfectly 'possible,'" said the patron, calmly. "It can be no great hardship for a young fellow to marry a pretty girl and have all his affairs set right and himself delivered from a whole whirlpool of misery. Don't you agree with me, Mr. Oscar?"

Agree! It was only too wonderful, too rapturous to have such a question asked, to be allowed to even think of one so dear as a bride, to dream of such a wild idea as the consent of Lord Delmore to such a wedding for his daughter; and yet what else could it be, what could be the meaning of Joseph Bradley's mysterious hints?

"There might be more doubt on the other side in any ordinary case," he replied. "I can say nothing, of course, except that I can tell nothing without the name of the young lady—that is, if you are serious, Mr. Bradley," he added, "which I can scarcely believe. It is too wild an idea that you have conjured up, and I am an idiot to attach any meaning to it."

"No, you are not—at least not in this instance," said Mr. Bradley, smiling. "What you may be in other cases I cannot possibly decide. But it is getting late and we had better come to the point I am driving at. In plain English, what would you say to my Lily, my pretty, gentle girl, as a wife, with such a dowry as would set you straight and, in any reasonable idea, keep you so?"

Oscar bounded to his feet and stood actually glaring at the well-satisfied Mr. Bradley, in doubt whether his ears had played him false or else whether he was in a hideous dream.

"Sir," he stammered, "this is more than a jest. It is an insult to play such a mockery only to see whether I am such an idiot as to believe it. Be so good as to let me go and to-morrow we will part. I would not give you any farther opportunity for such gibes and sport."

"Young man, you are an idiot to trifle so wantonly with your good fortune," replied Mr. Bradley, sternly. "If I did not excuse the excitement of your feelings in such a predicament I should certainly give you up to your own wilful course. But I have laid my plans for your benefit, and when I take up a thing I am not one to let it go in a hurry. Sit down and I will explain my meaning to you. In the first place, I will tell you that not only is Lily my favourite daughter, but that I have always formed an idea of marrying her to a man of her choice, as she has from childhood had a notion of some one rather different to what she had seen in our friends and connections. And now, as I believe you have taken rather a fancy to each other, and I have myself formed a liking for you, I will give my assent to the engagement and pay off your gambling and other debts and also settle something on her that will enable you to live in comfort all your life, else turns up you see for the better. Now then, you see my meaning and the wisdom of the measure. I have so perplexed you with, and I can hardly doubt, accept the boon I offer."

The blood of all the Vandeleurs blazed in the cheeks of their heir as he listened to the proposed image of Edith, in her loveliness and refinement, and of Gladys, his fair, sweet sister, run up before him in glaring and mocking contrast to the plain prettiness, the flippancy and the under-breeding of Joseph Bradley's daughter.

He had perhaps suspected that Lily did cherish or believed she cherished some kind of love and sympathy for him, but the only danger that he had thought of in such an inconvenient fancy was that it might expose her to the displeasure of her parents and himself to insult and blame. Such a climax as this he had never anticipated, and scarcely even now could he credit it as real.

"If you are serious, Mr. Bradley, I can only regret it and express my sincere gratitude to you," he said, with a proud composure; "but, for the rest, it is simply impossible."

"And pray for what reason, young man?" demanded the patron, with unmoved determination.

"I had rather not enter into the subject, Mr. Bradley, nor drag a lady's name into such a discussion," said the young man, proudly. "It is enough that I must decline the honour you intend for me."

Mr. Bradley's rubicund cheeks turned livid.

"Take care, young man! It were best for you to consider ere you reject an offer that may never be a second time brought to your very door. Think of your desperate position, your heavy debts, the stigma on your name, the hopeless ruin of your prospects, the means that I might very well take to prevent others being as much taken in as myself, and then give your ultimatum. I am in no especial haste, only that the events of fate have in a measure hastened the exposure of the scheme I have entertained for your benefit."

There was a plaintive disappointment in the gentleman's voice that had more effect on Oscar than the most violent torrent of words or reproaches.

"My dear sir, forgive me if I seem ungrateful. I am quite aware that you are really risking a great deal in your offer. Your money and your daughter's happiness are of course completely involved in the plan you have broached, and I assure you I am doing the best and the kindest thing for both in rejecting the offer," was Oscar's pleading response.

But Mr. Bradley did not seem to appreciate or accept the motives of the refusal.

"My dear young friend, it is all a heated imagination," he returned. "Perhaps you have too romantic an idea of all these matters, or else your taste is not just in the direction I imagined. If so, you need but tell me the simple truth. If it is more to your taste to have Rose, I have little doubt that she will be inclined to consent, and it would make little if any difference in my arrangements. Lucille would perhaps be too old for you and she is already promised, but—"

Oscar could scarcely restrain his indignation. It seemed well nigh past patience that the young daughter of Mr. Bradley should be trotted out before him like fillets at a fair.

His gentle instincts rebelled against such a desecration of the female sex, and his reply was barely restrained from expressing his feelings on the subject.

"I entreat you, Mr. Bradley, to spare me the pain of any farther expressions on this point. I may at least say thus much—that had not various circumstances intervened Miss Lily Bradley would certainly have been the most admired of your daughters by my own self. As it is, there can be no question of any such alliance."

Mr. Bradley bit his lips till the very blood came, but for some minutes he so far restrained the rage that shook his whole frame lest it should ruin the last chance of carrying out his plans.

"This is a young man's romance," he said. "I dare aver that either you have some hopeless fancy in your head that will be soon destroyed by the marriage of the subject, or else that you have false pride that restrains you from even attempting to like and to marry the daughter of one like myself who has no proud name and connections, only money to give the choice. But all this is great nonsense, my young friend, simple balderdash, believe me, to men of the world, and if you will take my advice you will seize the chance of rising to your own proper station, and bringing out a pretty wife to back your efforts."

It was an unfortunate ending to his speech. Perhaps the first argument might have prevailed, but his last words ruined the whole.

Lily Bradley, the daughter of that risen man, to be his assistant in the rise through life, to assist him in regaining his position as the heir of the Vandeleurs!

It was too overwhelming for ordinary; yet the clarity of his nature prevailed over passion and pride.

"Mr. Bradley, I entreat you to forbear. I have too great respect for the other sex to bring such degraded discussions to bear on their gentle names. It were a shame and would do your daughter, and for that sake let this end. I will leave your house on the morrow, if you please to insist it, and take my chance. I am but a sorry wretch as yet; I shall before me one day myself, whatever may be my misfortune, maintain career and fame."

Mr. Bradley gave a little, smiling laugh.

"Oh, that is all very well in theory, my good fellow," he replied; "but you will find it very different in practice. And, after all, what can a young man require more than a pretty girl and plenty of money to make him happy? There, don't be in such a desperate hurry to decide. I will give you leisure to reflect on what is best, and all that I do ask and require of you is that you shall—you will behave in my house as is correct and decorous during the interval, and that you will also make no difference in the manner of meeting Lily, or any of my family."

Oscar was more than ever bewildered at the strange persistence of the man.

It was so unaccountable that he should actually tolerate what might be termed insolence and a mortifying rejection of a favourite daughter and only redouble his patient forbearance, and press on the ingratitude such a generous offer.

Generous, in point of money, as Oscar could not but confess, but most insulting and grating to those higher instincts that were probably unintelligible to Joseph Bradley and his money-loving and money-getting ways.

All this rushed through his mind with a rapidity that left no room for the "patron" to speculate on the effect of his exactions, and when, at last, Oscar replied it was with a cold dignity that would better have befitted the injured host than the transgressing inmate of his family.

"You are very good, Mr. Bradley, very, but I cannot think it possible I can change in my ideas. Still, should I not think differently I should of course consider it equally kind of you to arrange such a charming way of getting out of my troubles. However, be that as it may, I shall certainly request you will not give your daughter the slightest idea of such a plan on your part, and I hope I am sufficiently a gentleman to behave with proper courtesy and respect to any woman."

"Are you content, sir, with such a mode of concluding our discussion?" he went on, with a slightly increased emphasis on the words.

"If Oh, certainly. I cannot doubt the final result," replied Mr. Bradley; "only—only, my young friend, remember that it would be far wiser on your part to yield without pressure. I, for one, have no wish to enter into the depths that threaten you, and I will promise frankly and freely to advance to you all that you require, without any inquiry as to the cause nor the position in which you have placed yourself. Mr. Vandeleur," he added, significantly, as he held a lamp to the young man that cast a full and strong light on his features. "Mr. Vandeleur, take my advice and do not tempt your fate. It is a bitter idea for a young man of your age and your position to sink into public disgrace and punishment. Good-night."

And, thrusting the lamp in Oscar's hand, he walked

to the door and held it open for his tutor to pass through.

CHAPTER XX.

THERE was a wretched awakening for the baronet's son after that memorable night, and his first impulse was to abandon all that remained to him of hope and expectations as to Mr. Bradley's interference with his affairs. It was too degrading and too entirely miserable a prospect even to dream of marrying Joseph Bradley's daughter, the rapid and underbred Lily.

And again the vision of such a wife ever becoming the friend or sister of those he loved best appeared before him as an almost ludicrous absurdity.

There was safety in delay, he thought, and he had at least the opportunity of testing its virtue.

So, with a bitter laugh at himself and his wild folly that had so entirely bewitched and carried out his father's worst predictions, or wishes concerning him, he prepared to dress himself and descend to the breakfast table.

But ere he was fully prepared for joining the party below there came a knock at the door, and a servant brought him in two letters that had just arrived by the early post.

One was in a female hand, that he recognized as from Gladys, and the other in a business-like and very concise writing, that emanated on its very envelope and address a glowing character to his untamed nerves.

He opened his sister's epistle first, with a pardonable covetousness, and began to read its affectionate and sympathetic contents.

"Oscar, dearest, I had such hopes that I should have been able to procure you a friend who would place you beyond all the miserable doubts and fears and suspicions that I am almost sure driving you to what may ruin you in this world and the next. Darling Oscar, for my sake, for I shall know as a sister to you that your boyhood—be brave and resolute. The day must come when all this injustice and misery must end, and you will regain your rights."

"Oh! if the good and kindly man who would have saved all had but lived! I had promised to be his wife, if only he would be your friend, but he was snatched away suddenly, and I am once more left helpless to aid you."

But he did insist on giving me a small sum of money to carry out my wishes to help you in need, and I only wait for some more tidings of you and for a proper channel, to send you some of this kind friend's legacy to me for you. But if you will—if you can—but give me the assurance that you are not in such deep trouble as I fear, and that you will be patient for our sakes, it will make me happy even now, when no one but you even cares for me—when our father's whole affection is taken up with Wenna, and I am but as it were on sufferance in the house of our ancestors."

Forgive me for speaking of my own petty sorrows, dear Oscar; it is but as another reason why you will for my sake be brave and patient. Write to me—and fully and freely. I will ever hold myself devoted to your happiness, my dear injured brother."

"Your loving sister,"

"GLADYS."

"P.S.—There is a report that Lady Balch is going to be married to Prince Claude de Loriano, but I am not certain whether it is true; if of course it is so it will perhaps give her another chance of serving you through her husband."

Oscar dropped the sheet with a sharp cry of agony.

"Married! Yes; how could I be so weak as to doubt that such would be the case? And poor Gladys, too, with her sanguine hopes of serving me through this wonderful suitor of hers—and now with perhaps some fifty pounds or so—like a drop in the ocean, that will scarcely save off my ruin for a single day. And now what shall I do?—what shall I do?" he moaned, as he desperately turned to the other letter that lay before him. There is something there, or I mistake its aspect! Well, it matters not; I could not well be worse. I may as well be in ruin as in the terror of it."

And he opened the ominous looking missive as he uttered the words.

He read the first few lines and then threw it down on the ground and cast himself in a chair with a fearful groan.

It was hopeless now, quite hopeless. The letter was brief, but most tersely significant.

"Sir,"

"We hold the bill for which we gave cash at the instance of the Hon. Ernest Vallentin, and as that gentleman has just been ordered off to a distant station, and as there appear to be some pecuniary

ties in the matter, we beg to state that we shall not wait any longer than the first term on which the document is renewable, which will expire in a fortnight from this time, and when we shall demand immediate payment.

"Excuse our hinting that it might be made the cause of criminal as well as civil proceedings if the demand is not fully met."

"We are, sir,

"Your obedient servants,

"OSCAR, ERNEST & JACOB."

Oscar perused this document again and again when the first horror of the summons had passed away.

He had not seen Ernest Vallot for some weeks, but had understood that he was merely staying at some friend's in Scotland for the shooting, and this calamity had never even crossed his mind as a probable contingency.

But now that he was coolly and suddenly called to meet he hardly knew what, and again with an estimation that there was some peculiarity attached to the transaction, the stunning horror that overwhelmed him might be more easily conceived than described.

The breakfast bell rang, and was literally unheard by him in the noisy confusion that seemed to blind his very faculties.

Still he sat there with his letters spread before him, and some more terrible ideas than they presented to his mind.

But at length there was a knock at the door, and a silver voice exclaimed:

"Mr. Vandeleur, papa has sent me to know whether you are ill, and whether he shall send you some breakfast, or whether you will like to find in the study for you?"

It was Lily who spoke, and Oscar scarcely knew whether to shrink from or to welcome the confirmation that her presence gave of the reality of the disaster that had been made to him on the previous night.

But at the least there seemed no doubt of the common courtesy that would render it proper for him to respond to the fair envoy in person.

"Miss Lily Bradley is far too good to take such trouble," he said, opening the door hastily, and standing, as he believed, so as to entirely hide the apartment and more expressly the tell-tale correspondence from the girl's eyes.

"Very likely," she answered, in a gentle, sweet tone; that she could certainly boast as one of her attributes over her sisters, "very likely, but still I am bound to obey my superiors, you know; and besides I had a very foolish idea myself that you might be sick or in trouble, and it is very dreary to be so without any one to cheer and sympathize with one, and therefore I came, without feeling it a very great hardship, you see, Monsieur Oscar."

Lily looked very fresh and pretty in her irreproachable morning toilet of pale blue muslin, with its tasteful trimmings of black velvet. And there was also an earnest pleading in her eyes that gave them beauty in the excited and even crushed nerves of the unfortunate Oscar.

"You are very kind—I appreciate it, believe me," he said, in a broken voice; but I cannot do more, I am too utterly beyond any woman's love or sympathy. Leave me, I entreat: I want no breakfast, no help, only to be in solitude and peace!"

But still Lily remained:

"You are wrong, quite wrong," she said; "I don't know anything that cannot be avoided when there are money and inclination to attempt the remedy. And I believe I can do what I please with papa, for he has always spoiled me from a child. Why will you be so provokingly stupid?" she went on. "I tell you it is your own fault that you got so ill and miserable or else it is that horrid Charles Bampfylde. Come, shall I tell papa that you will have breakfast in the study, if I am allowed to make it for you?"

Oscar was too confused to decide whether the girl really had any idea of her father's wishes, or whether it was only the wilful levity and coquetry of a petted and uncontrolled child; but he was wise enough to act on the first hypothesis.

Mr. Bradley is extremely kind, and you still more so. I should be very ungrateful not to accept such gracious offers," he said, with a mighty effort at composure. "But you really are in earnest, Miss Lily, I will try and eat some breakfast, though only your kind and gentle persuasion would induce me to attempt it. I shall have the honour of receiving it from your hands, whenever you may choose to favour me, thus far," he added, perceiving that she did not immediately leave the room.

There was still a slight hesitation, and then the girl seemed to change her mind, and she passed lightly from the corridor and ran eagerly downstairs.

Oscar only waited to conceal the ominous letters and to steady the whirling tumult of his brain, ere he followed his proposed fiancée to the study, where in

a marvellously short space of time the tempting tray was brought in and the young pupil of Mr. Vandeleur was also in waiting.

"There, now drink this coffee, and eat these new laid eggs," M. le Malade, said Lily, playfully, "and you, Philip, shall have the more substantial broiled ham, which cook considers indispensable to masculine appetites. Really, I begin to feel quite domestic," she added, laughingly. "I wonder whether I ever should turn into a useful, home-keeping damsel, under proper tuition."

"And what do you call proper tuition?" asked Oscar, forcing himself to mingle in the badinage that yet seemed such mockery to him in his present state of feelings.

"That of some one I could respect and like," was the significant reply. "I am certain it would make a wonderful difference in my ideas. I am very different from Lucille, and even Ross, so I suppose I happen to suit papa better, as I am his favourite child."

Philip had concluded his breakfast and disappeared during the dialogue, and the girl, with a hurried glance round the room, went on, in a lower tone: "I must not stay, or they would be annoyed with me, even though papa desired it, but I do want to say once more that you need not despair, Mr. Vandeleur, however troubled you may be, if it is only money that vexes you. Don't be shocked at my knowing what young men do. One cannot read novels without learning something of their ways, and sometimes there is cheating as well as ill luck to upset their arrangements. So do not forget my warning. You need not be so terribly despairing as you looked just now when I came to call you. Adieu! Au revoir!"

And with the very slightest possible fling of her white fingers after touching her lips with their tips, and a coquettish smile, the young girl vanished.

Oscar remained in a pitiable bewilderment after this retreat.

There was such a struggle in his mind between the utter repugnance to the proposed union and the fearful alternative which menaced him that his faculties well nigh gave way under the contest.

To be son-in-law to Joseph Bradley and his wife and brother to their children and nephew and cousin to a host of low-born and low-bred relatives was fearful enough to deter him even from a love-matching; but when his heart was engaged, when the very idea of such a marriage was most crushing to his every feeling, then such a prospect was wretchedness indeed.

But then the reverse of the picture was even blacker to contemplate. Debt, disgrace, ruin, and, if those ominous lines could be credited, a yet graver and more aggravated penalty stared him in the face.

The baronet's son, the heir of broad lands and an ancient name, might perhaps stand in a felon's dock if that miserable letter spoke true. Yet Oscar could scarcely credit such an imputation on his friend or himself.

Ernest Vallot was surely too entirely a gentleman in birth and in spirit for the possibility of such guile, as well as the casting his burden on other shoulders than his own.

It must be a mistake, a hideous mistake, and ere he would act upon it he determined to face and to ascertain the probable amount of the risk incurred.

"I will go," he muttered, starting up from the chair in which he had sat silently absorbed in a complete torrent of rapidly flowing emotions, hopes and fears. "I will know the worst and then decide."

He rang the bell, summoned his trusty pupil to the apartment and, giving him some employment for the next hour or two, announced his enforced absence, and requested as a favour that he should not be reported in the higher quarters for special reasons. Philip's knowing nod and "All right, guv'nor," was at once satisfactory and ominous to the unlucky tutor.

CHAPTER XXI.

"It is a great pity, Mr. Vandeleur, and we much regret the existence of such a necessity, but as a matter of business we cannot waive our decision," said the dark, Jewish-looking gentleman who was the mouthpiece of the firm of Oppenheim and Jacobs. "There is evidently some mistake in the matter in question, and whether it lies with yourself or with Mr. Vallot it is impossible to say; that is, between yourselves, and we are willing to give time for any such arrangements as you may see fit to make. All we have to do with is the fact that the money is owing on such a day and that it must be paid on such a day, or else the consequences be incurred without appeal."

And the gentleman gave a significant nod and rap on the table with his paper-knife that certainly did

not admit of any shadow of doubt or of hope in the affair.

Mr. Oscar Vandeleur decidedly took that view of his companion's meaning, and a very uncomfortable conviction it undoubtedly was.

"If a bonus was paid—a handsome bonus—on the account for a certain brief delay, what then? Would you not be inclined to give time? I do not in the least comprehend your insinuations, Mr. Oppenheim," said the baronet's son, pleadingly. "I have always understood that you gentlemen were always ready to accommodate those who had any kind of reversionary security. Mr. Vallot, no doubt, gave you ample proof of mine. There could be no suspicion left on that head, I feel certain," continued Oscar, with a quick, nervous appeal in his whole look and tone.

"Oh, yes, there is no doubt that you, Mr. Oscar Vandeleur, are in every respect what you profess, or else we should certainly not have cashed the amount we have done on the bare security," returned Mr. Oppenheim. "But, my dear sir, it is one thing to incur pecuniary obligations and to throw away the hope of realising money, and I do not hesitate to tell you the one suspicious feature about this bill that has given me great and well-founded uneasiness. Still it would have been a grave and needless scandal to expose or attempt to test those doubts earlier in the affair, and even now we had rather not expose them in plain words. Better say at once that, especially in Mr. Vallot's absence, there is no chance of further delay. (The account must be met for it will be put in a detective officer's hands.)"

Oscar's eyes flashed indignantly.

"Mr. Oppenheim, I would submit to no such degrading insinuations!" he exclaimed. "I had far rather that you should in plain English tell me what you suspect in the matter than talk in this irritating and most unfounded style. What is the matter with this unlucky bill?"

A peculiar and cynical smile crossed the money-lender's features.

"Don't be too sure, young gentleman, that you prefer such candour," he returned, "and what is more, take care that you don't provide them on whom you depend for subsistence in such a case. However, if you really are determined to hear in plain English what had better be veiled, I am ready to gratify you. The bill, Mr. Vandeleur, is one that bears what our minds are very unmistakable marks of—"

He stopped, and Oscar, with constrained composure, interposed:

"Of what? Be so good as to go on, Mr. Oppenheim."

"As you will. It is an ugly word, but you insist on its being spoken. Of—Forgery."

And Mr. Oppenheim pronounced the last word as if he were afraid that the very walls around should catch the sound, but the effect was not the less electrical on his companion.

"I do not understand; it is impossible I you are dreaming!" he exclaimed, fiercely.

"I pardon your distemperance but it is entirely unfounded," replied the money-lender, calmly. "There is a name attached to the bill which I have the best reason—the very best I say—to believe is not genuine, and, therefore, it can only deserve the expression I applied to it but now."

Oscar's colour varied as painfully and rapidly as any woman's as he listened, and there was a terrible constraint and twang in the tone with which he observed:

"I know of no name except my own and Mr. Vallot's, and I am certain of the unpleasant fact that we both did affix them to the document—I may say most fearfully to our sorrow," he went on, in a bitter accent.

"No doubt that you did, Mr. Vandeleur, and no doubt that you are a baronet's son, as well as that Mr. Vallot is a peer's heir, but in addition to those signatures we have that of the wealthy Mr. Joseph Bradley—whether it was by his own act and deed remains yet to be seen."

It was a crushing revelation, a most overwhelming suspicion, and so Oscar felt it to the core.

His frame quivered and trembled, and his very teeth chattered at the wretched vision that was thus conjured up to his view.

Of all the unpardonable sins he knew that to a man of business forgery would be the most flagrant, and yet what means could there be of disproving in any manner his complicity in the transaction?

"Mr. Oppenheim, if you are not jesting, I can assure you that all this is quite as new to me as it can be to the gentleman himself. I never knew or suspected that Mr. Bradley's name was to the bill."

Mr. Oppenheim shrugged his shoulders.

"I am sorry that the affair should be so tangled for every one's sake," he remarked; "I am bound to act on facts, not on assurances and assertions, and I can assure you that I am correct in what I state."

Mr. Bradley's name is affixed to the bills, and was indeed one great reason why we were willing to discount so large an amount, though I confess that we were somewhat lax in our inquiries on the point, deceived by the belief that we were dealing with gentlemen.

"And you see, Mr. Vandeleur, that at a first and most probable view you would be certainly the person fixed upon as the agent, since you were in the gentleman's family, and of course with facilities to obtain Mr. Bradley's signature, or to imitate it."

Oscar groaned fearfully. He saw at a glance the whole amount of his danger.

Whether purposely or accidentally, Ernest Valletot had left him most painfully in the lurch, and his ruin and disgrace appeared imminent unless—unless—but then the very idea seemed incredible—utterly incredible, and he could only meet the danger as it stood boldly and face to face.

"Mr. Oppenheim," he said, "I suppose it is of no use to meet your assertion with a counter one; but still in justice to myself I must say that I am as innocent as you are of any such proceeding as this criminal act. I never knew or even thought of Mr. Bradley as any party to a transaction in which he could have no profit and interest, and the bill is not quite so large a one as to render the name of a millionaire so necessary as you seem to imply."

"Pardon me, it is not a trifle, it is two thousand five hundred pounds, young gentleman," said the money-lender, significantly, "at least not in the eye of those who lend, whatever it may be in those of the borrower; and we are not in the habit of risking our money so recklessly."

Again Oscar felt as if an arrow had struck him. Two thousand was pretty well double what he had ever suspected or known of.

Ernest Valletot could be little better than a swindler, that was becoming each moment more certain to his mind.

But he held his peace; an idea that it would but precipitate matters for him to confess such utter ignorance closed his lips, and he replied:

"Well, I agree with you so far, Mr. Oppenheim, but I again most positively repeat my utter denial of any complicity in this strange matter, or any liability to such charges."

"That must be a matter entirely personal, Mr. Vandeleur," replied the man. "You will see at a glance the whole situation. Suppose that Mr. Bradley, as we may safely assume, denies any knowledge of the bill and you do not at once take it up you will perceive that we have no alternative but to commence criminal proceedings against yourself and Mr. Valletot. Of course he is in a distant land, and I hardly know what would be the proceedings in his case, but you would certainly have to prove your innocence, if it really exists, and to settle the amount of guilty responsibility as you best may with that gentleman," continued the money-lender, with provoking coolness.

Oscar knew it well. He was young and inexperienced, but still there could be no question as to what would be the practical aspect and proceedings in the case, and each moment his own position deepened in gravity.

No possible crime or imputation of crime could be more degrading, and, as he knew, nothing was more heavily visited by the law or by the verdict of society. Yet what possible hope could there be for him in such a helpless predicament, without a friend whom he could or would call to his rescue? But he determined to make one desperate effort more.

"Mr. Oppenheim, you say that sum is a heavy one for you to lose, and at present it is a very hopeless one for me to pay, but still in the course of nature such will not always be so. My father's death must inevitably place me in a position to pay you the principal and interest, which I most certainly would be prompt to do, although I repeat that a great deal of the affair is just as mysterious to me as to you. Is not such a plan as this subject to arrangement?" he asked, in a half-pleading, half-despairing tone.

Mr. Oppenheim shook his head.

"No, Mr. Vandeleur, not without security, as a minute's reflection will make clear to you. Suppose your father, Sir Lewis, were to live for the next ten or twenty years, as it is more than probable, or suppose that he were to outlive you, of course our loss would be extremely heavy, and I do not consider that any amount of interest would atone for keeping us so long out of the principal of so large a sum. No, there is no other alternative save the money or a prosecution, without much more delay than the precise period we have named."

Oscar sat silent and thoughtful.

There could be no expedient suggested to his mind in such an emergency save one, and that he scarcely considered feasible in such extremities.

Let Mr. Bradley be ever so indulgent on Lily, ever

so infatuated in his favour, it was incredible that she could ever pass over and assist him in such a desperate and disgraceful plight, and for Edith and Gladys, such degradation was not to reach their pure ears, even if they could have any power to help him.

There was nothing more to be said or done at that instant; he could not think of one shadow of a resource by which to appeal to the money-lender and his pride was still unconquered, if his name and his character were burdened with such a foul imputation.

"Mr. Oppenheim," he said, rising, "I must think of and examine these startling facts, and then I will see you once more. But meanwhile understand that I distinctly and positively deny all but folly and rashness in this wretched and mysterious affair."

(To be continued.)

EXILED FROM HOME.

CHAPTER IV.

MRS. QUILLLET laid the now sleeping infant in its cradle—the cradle that had rocked the lost heiress seventeen or eighteen years before—and hurried below.

She carried in the squire's dinner on a tray, as had been her custom of late. Her master sat in an arm-chair, still by the window. The fire had gone out; the room was very cold. A single candle burned dimly in a remote corner.

Mrs. Quillet set down the tray and uttered profuse apologies for the cheerless condition of the room. Trembling with apprehension, she rushed to the grate to stir up any possibly lingering embers, but the squire's voice, hard and metallic, bade her let the fire alone.

"I want no fire," he said. "Where is Quillet?"

"Up stairs, sir. He is tired, sir, and chilled through, but I'll call him, sir."

"Let him alone! Are the servants all in?"

"All in, sir."

The squire asked no more questions. The old woman's face told him that the search had been unsuccessful. His face grew a shade grayer, if that were possible, and he motioned her to take away the tray, as if the sight of it sickened him.

Mrs. Quillet withdrew with her burden, and the old squire was left again to his darkness, cold, and loneliness.

The old housekeeper noticed that he did not retire to his room that night.

The next day, and the next, the servants continued their explorations of the moor. The snow gradually ceased to fall, but the air was crisp and cold, and the snow that lay on the ground did not melt. The secret of the lost girl's fate remained a secret which no exertion could solve.

It was in December that the ill-fated heiress had gone forth in storm and terror. In January, a three days' snow was added to the one we have described, and while that still lay unmelting another occurred in February, March was stormy and blustering. It was not until early in April that the tardy spring made base the wide far-stretching moors, and that the searchers finally resumed their work, under the orders and directions of old Quillet, for it must be understood that the squire had never spoken one word, save those we have narrated, of the lost girl and her fate.

It had been a strange, hard winter to Squire Markham. He had abandoned his old sitting-room and taken up his quarters in the gloomy library, whose windows commanded a wide view of the moor. He had no fire in the library during the winter, although the season was unusually severe. His meals were frugal and often scarcely touched. Some of the servants whispered among themselves that the master was "growing a miser," but the butler and housekeeper alone knew of the worm that gnawed secretly at the old man's heart.

It was the third day in April when the little party of mounted men, with the old butler at their head, rode out of the stable-yard at Lonsmoor, separated at the gates, and hurried upon their quest.

The squire saw them depart, but his impassive countenance might have been carved of wood or stone for any sign of emotion or interest he showed.

Yet he paced his floor for hours, and his meals were untouched.

The servants returned singly, having been unsuccessful, at intervals throughout the day, and all except the butler and two others.

These rode in about nightfall, at a funeral pace followed by an undertaker's cart. The squire,

staring from his window, saw that the cart held a box, whose horrible contents he could only too well surmise.

Mrs. Quillet ran down to the stable-yard, and her husband drew her aside, and said to her in an agitated whisper:

"She's found at last! We've brought her home, Maria—"

"Where did you find her?"

"Five miles this side of Penistone. She had fallen into a deep hollow, where the snows had covered her all winter. It was an awful sight. We left her there and hurried to Penistone for the coroner and undertaker. They've had an inquest, and I thought best to bring her home—"

"Are you sure it is our young lady? Are you very sure, John?"

"I could swear to it. Her clothes were all soaked, she was a horrible sight to look upon after all these months; but it is our young mistress, Maria. I'll swear to it. Her long black hair was streaming all about her in ropes—I am sick when I think of it. You must not see her, or the sight will haunt you to your death. What are we to do? Will the master let her be buried as she ought? He cursed her to her death. Will he give her body decent burial?"

"You said there was an inquest. Did any one suspect who she was?"

"No one. They believe her a wandering, crazed vagrant, who was sheltered at Lonsmoor, gave birth to a child here, and in her madness wandered forth again to die."

"I'll see the master," said Mrs. Quillet. "Let the cart stay until I hear what he has to say."

She hurried into the house, and to the library. The squire turned his cold, hard gaze upon her, and with a faltering tongue and streaming eyes she told her story.

"What shall we do with her?" she asked. "Shall we take her to the great hall, or to the dead-room?"

"You said, I believe, that her real identity remained unsuspected by the coroner, the undertaker, and their gaping crew?"

"Yes, master; John took good care of that."

"Why should Quillet bring to Lonsmoor the body of a vagrant?" demanded the squire, harshly. "The woman was nothing to me. Take her body, hence. It cannot rest under my roof to-night!"

"Oh, master—"

"Go!"

Mrs. Quillet slowly withdrew, returning to her husband.

"His heart is utterly hardened, John," she whispered. "He will not give her decent burial. He says she must be taken away immediately."

The butler's face grew stern.

"She shall not lie in a pauper's grave while I have a single sovereign!" he exclaimed. "I'll see her buried decently, Maria."

The butler mounted beside the undertaker, and the cart set out upon its return journey to Penistone.

Quillet returned the next day about noon, in the market-cart which his wife had sent to fetch him.

"She's buried, Maria," he said, when the two were in an upper room together. "I had a clergyman to say a prayer over her. Her life is ended, poor misguided, unhappy young creature. And the life of her child is scarcely begun. Thank Heaven, the child is weak and sickly. She'll soon follow her mother, and the tragedy will be ended."

At an early hour upon the morning after the funeral at Penistone, directly after his breakfast, which he had not touched, Squire Markham rang his bell violently, and summoned both his housekeeper and his butler to his presence.

They came in, apprehensive of dismissal from his service.

They found him pacing his floor restlessly after his usual habit. He turned his face towards them, and they were startled at the greater change a few hours had wrought in it. His eyes were more sunken; his features more haggard; his expression one of utter hopelessness. His form was bowed, too, as under the weight of many added years. He looked like a stately tree over which a tornado had passed. Cold and hard and stern as ever, there was now an atmosphere of desolation about him, a strange loneliness that touched even these dependents, who secretly judged him harshly.

"He is all broken up," thought the butler. "Who would recognize in him the genial hospitable gentlemen of two years ago?"

Ah, who indeed?

"I have summoned you both for a brief private

conference," said the squire, not halting in his march. "It is time that we understood each other. You hold in your keeping a secret of the most vital importance to me—a secret concerning the honour of this house and my old name. Have either of you ever by word or look betrayed that secret, or even a hint of it, to any human being?"

"Never!" cried the husband and wife, in one breath.

Squire Markham's burning eyes seemed to pierce to their souls, but he found in them no shadow of untruth. The old couple had been not less resolute than he, even in their discourse with each other.

"It is well," he said. "Now swear to me that the secret of my house, the maternity of that child, shall never escape your lips!"

"I swear it!" said the butler.

"I swear to keep the secret until you yourself, squire, give me leave to speak it," said the old housekeeper, solemnly.

Her master smiled sardonically.

"Then you will die with it untold," he said.

"You have sworn to keep this secret. You have both served me many years, and I never detected either of you in fault. I have proved your fidelity to me, your sense of honour, your affection. You shall not lose your reward. Lenemoor is become distasteful to me. I have decided to go abroad to remain for years—very probably for ever. I have ordered the carriage, and shall start for Penistone within the hour!"

The old servants uttered no exclamations, betrayed no surprise. In truth, it seemed to them that nothing now could ever surprise them.

"I had a long talk with my land-bailiff last night," continued the squire. "It is needless for me to tell you that he knows nothing—suspects nothing—of this secret. I have told him simply that I need a change. He is faithful and honest. Lenemoor and its tenantry will be safe in his hands. He has orders to pay you each an increased salary. You will dismiss all unnecessary servants, reduce the household, close the family rooms, and exclude all visitors. You will communicate with me through my solicitor once a month, giving me the minutest intelligence concerning the place."

The butler and housekeeper bowed assent.

"The stables will be reduced," said the squire.

"The hunters will be sold. The land-bailiff will attend to that. There is but one thing more to mention."

He took a turn or two about the floor, and then said, hesitantly:

"The child? I have never seen it. Is it a boy?"

"No, sir, a girl—a bonnie, wee girl," said the old housekeeper, eagerly.

"Is she healthy?"

"She is weak and frail, sir. It's a question if she worries through," said Mrs. Quillet, sorrowfully. "I don't quite think she'll live to grow a woman."

The squire's face lightened a little.

"So much the better," he said briefly. "If she dies, you may mention the fact in your letter."

"Will you not see her, sir?" asked the housekeeper, tremulously. "Oh, sir, she is so sweet and delicate and pretty—"

"Hush!" commanded the squire, sternly. "You know not what you ask. I hope she will die. As you say that she is frail, I need make no further mention of her. I have said all that is necessary. You may go."

The pair retired, and the land-bailiff, who resided upon the estate, was announced.

An hour later, Squire Markham and Orkney, the bailiff, departed in the carriage for Penistone.

They parted company at the railway station, and Squire Markham went up alone to London. The next day he crossed to Dover, and proceeded by rapid stages to Berlin.

It is not our purpose to narrate the experience or adventures of the grim old squire. It is enough for us to say that he spent some months in Berlin, that he then wandered to Italy to Greece, to Syria and to Egypt, trying to lose amid strange scenes and under foreign skies the haunting memories of the past.

But wherever he went he carried his skeleton with him.

In Rome, amid the mighty relics of the mighty past—in Greece, under the shadow of ancient art—upon the Nile, when floating under moonlit skies between palm-shaded banks in his dahabiah, in the sunny days or lonely nights, he saw always in his thoughts the face of the daughter he had cursed—the daughter who had returned to him like a spirit of

the storm, wild and crazed, and who had fled again into the storm with his curse upon her, to meet her death.

He received monthly packets from his solicitor, containing letters from his land-bailiff, butler and housekeeper. But in none of these letters was mention made of the death of his daughter's child. No allusion was even made to her existence. He did not know by what name Mrs. Quillet had called her. He looked for the mention of her death, and, not finding it, gave no further thought to her.

Years were consumed in these wanderings. Strange adventures happened to him. He found no pleasure in his journeyings, but he could not return to his desolated home. The grimness and hardness that had come upon him after his first visit to Berlin had now become his true characteristics. He was harsh and suspicious. All his former geniality and warm-heartedness had utterly vanished. His life had been laid waste, and he looked upon death as a friend, but death shunned him.

Tired of aimless wanderings, he took a house in Alexandria, and settled down into a hermit-like existence, seeing none of his countrymen, and being attended only by black-servants. Thus passed years. Then the old spirit of unrest that had slept so long awoke again, and he resumed his journeyings, still keeping, however, within a month of England.

One day, a strange fit of retrospection came upon him, and with it came a longing for home—a longing as irritable as it was sudden and strange.

He was riding into Jerusalem, from the valley of Kedron, when the impulse came upon him to seek again the old home at Lenemoor, the home in which he had been born, and where he had once expected to die.

"It is seventeen years since that awful tragedy," he thought. "Seventeen years since I left England. Why should I not go back, if only for a brief visit?"

The thought grew upon him.

"I will not stay there," he thought. "I could never endure to remain there. But I would like one glimpse of the old house, the woods, the moor. The child must be dead, although the Quillets have forgotten to mention the fact. They said she was weak and frail—yes, she is certainly dead. I have missed one or two packets of letters during these seventeen years. Probably one of the missing packets contained the announcement of her death."

This seemed more than probable, and he persuaded himself that his theory was true, that his grandchild was dead, and that one of the missing packets of letters had contained the announcement of her death. Thenceforward no thought of the girl entered his mind.

He rode at a quickened pace to his inn and went up to the small, ill-lighted, bare chamber he had for several weeks occupied.

A cracked mirror hung upon the wall. He glanced into it, beholding his reflection, and a bitter smile curled his lips. A long white beard fell upon his breast. His hair hung in long white locks upon his shoulders. His eyes, dark and fierce, burned like coals in the midst of a hard, stern, frosty visage.

"They would hardly know me," he said to himself. "They? Who are they? The bailiff, the butler, the housekeeper? Whom have I left in England? I cut loose from the old friends long before I began my wanderings. I am friendless, still smarting under my secret disgrace. Yet I will go back on a flying visit and then return to Alexandria and the old house there and so settle down for good."

He tossed his few effects into his travelling-bag and hastened to make arrangements for his departure.

An hour later he was riding out of Jerusalem with a little train of travellers and merchants on his way to Joppa.

He journeyed leisurely towards England, half-ashamed of the impulse which drew him thither, and half-resolved to give over his project even now. He lingered at various points along the route, and spent more than a week at Marseilles and a fortnight in Paris.

He arrived in England on a foggy, dull day in January, and hastened up to London. He remained there a week, devoured with unrest, half-resolved to take ship for Australia. His beard and hair had been trimmed, his attire conformed to English custom, but still he could scarcely have been recognized at first glance by one who had formerly known him.

"I'll run down to Penistone and see my lawyer," he at last decided, "and visit Lenemoor and my bailiff. I'll be off again the same day. There is nothing to keep me in England!"

He started the next morning for Yorkshire. A

Penistone he visited his solicitor, was duly recognized, examined into his business affairs, and found, as he had expected to find, everything in flourishing condition.

The following day he took a carriage, and drove towards Lenemoor.

He had asked his solicitor no question concerning the child under Mrs. Quillet's charge. And the solicitor had made no mention of her, although he had spoken repeatedly of the Quillets, of Lenemoor, and of the bailiff.

"If she had been living, she would be now sixteen years old," thought the squire, as he drove rapidly over the road that traversed the moor. "He would certainly have spoken of her if she were in existence. The lawyer's silence in regard to her is proof positive that she is dead!"

He touched up his horse, which sped onwards between the banks of gorse and heather, now peeping out from a thin sifting of snow, and gradually the old mansion of Lenemoor dawned upon his vision.

And now his heart, which he had thought dead to all feeling, swelled within him.

"Home!" he said to himself. "Home again—after all these years! What changes have occurred since I went away? I almost think that if the girl is dead I'll not go abroad again. Of course she's dead. She must be dead! A few minutes more and I shall know!"

CHAPTER V.

DURING the seventeen years of Squire Markham's wanderings what had become of the child of the unfortunate Constance Markham?

A life begun under conditions like those under which her life had begun, if it were prolonged to adult years, could not be other than extraordinary.

Had it been so prolonged, and did she live to bear her heritage of shame and woe! Or had she haply died in her infancy, as the squire hoped and believed?

These questions we now purpose answering.

The little waif struggled through a feeble, sickly infancy, experiencing every infantile disease. The good Penistone doctor, who had attended her young mother, paid her frequent visits, being summoned by Quillets, and the child passed safely through the two first years and grew stronger thereafter at an astonishingly rapid rate. When she had attained the age of three years the doctor declared her an incarnation of health, and ventured to predict for her a long life, and declared that she would thenceforth not require his continued services.

And then, for the first time, the old housekeeper and butler faced the prospect of the girl's growth to womanhood.

They were alone in the housekeeper's room in the evening, after the doctor's departure. The child was asleep upstairs.

"John," said Mrs. Quillet, "you heard what the doctor said? The child will probably live to be an old woman. She has outgrown all her baby weakness, although I did not realize the fact till when the doctor came in to see about my rheumatism. What would the squire say if he knew?"

"He would send her out of the house," said the butler, "to some orphan asylum, or foundling, most like. He would never have let her remain here if he hadn't believed and expected she would die. It was that speech of yours about her feebleness that decided him to allow her to remain."

"I am not over fond of the child," said Mrs. Quillet, "although I own she has rare, winning ways and is a thorough beauty; but, you see, I can never forget all the trouble she brought with her upon us all. She came to us in mystery. She made the master a wanderer on the face of the earth. But for her Miss Constance might have been alive at this day."

"But the child is not to blame, Maria."

"I know it. I suppose it's unjust, John, and I blame myself for it; yet I lay to the child's door all the trouble and shame of Miss Constance's awful fate! And I can't love her—I can't cuddle her up in my arms as I did our own young lady in her babyhood; I can't kiss her and pet her. For poor Miss Constance's sake—because the child was hers—I give her a nurse's care; but my heart is not in it. And I do believe, John, the child knows how I feel towards her; for sometimes she fixes her big eyes on me in a look that makes me uneasy. I've often and often prayed for her death; for her very existence seems a sin; and she keeps all that shame alive in our memories. But, although I'd be glad to have her die, I could never send her to an orphan

asylum. For Miss Constance's sake she shall be brought up a lady.

"We've no children of our own," said the butler. "We have laid up a little money, and all we have come to us from the Markhams. Let a portion go back to them through the child!"

"Who was her father?" said the housekeeper, musingly. "What was his name and station? And that reminds me, John, since the child will live, we ought to give her a name. Think of it! Three years old, and she has no name!"

"Time she was christened," said the butler. "It won't do to go on calling her by the pet name 'Princess' any longer. Why not name her after her mother?"

"Constance? And set the servants wondering? And make gossip? And infuriate the master? John, you surprise me. I thought you had sense."

"Then why not name her Maria after yourself?" suggested the butler.

"I don't love her enough. Besides, it might be proved some day that she was well-born—such a thing is just possible—and then the master would be angry at my presumption. She shan't be Maria, nor yet Quillet!" declared the old woman, decisively. "She shall have a well-sounding name, one that won't be too fine if she has to earn her own living, but I won't call her after us, lest there be bad blood in her, and she should disgrace us."

"She looks something like the picture of the earl's daughter who married Squire Markham, the master's grandfather," said the butler, meditatively. "She was haughty and proud, I've heard tell, and the greatest beauty in Yorkshire—the Lady Gwendoline, you know."

"Gwendoline!" repeated the housekeeper. "And why should not we call her Gwendoline? If it should chance that the squire should take a fancy, to her and adopt her, as it is just possible, the name would suit her, and he would like it. But if she had to earn her own support, Gwen would not be too fine, and would do equally well. Let us call her Gwendoline. But Gwendoline what?"

"It was frightfully wintry weather that November night when she came," said the butler. "I shall never forget those two nights—the nights when our young lady came and went. But, as I was going to say, if you don't want her called Quillet, why not call her Winter?"

"That will do. The name will probably typify her life," said Mrs. Quillet, sighing.

"She's Gwendoline Winter, henceforth. And being what she is, we must not call her Princess any longer. It's a wonder to me that we've not got into trouble with the law through not having her christened, for I seem to have heard that there's a law that children must be christened. But that hard winter that followed her birth, and our isolation on the moors, and the house being closed, and all, and the child being supposed the daughter of a vagrant, we escaped official notice—if so be any is ever given!"

And this was the way in which the little nameless waif received her name of Gwendoline Winter.

The child grew in years, in strength and beauty. The pretty, imperious ways that had from the first won her the name "Princess" grew with her growth. She was active, quickwitted, impulsive, bright, sweet and wilful as any spoiled darling in the land. But she was no spoiled darling. No one ever caressed her; she was lonely even in her babyhood. Any temperament less warm and sunny than hers would inevitably have soured under such neglect and coldness.

Mrs. Quillet, remembering always the great sorrow of which the child was the living sign and token, had no real love for her, and at times could not bear to have her in sight. The little one, warm-hearted and loving, clung to her until constant repulses and chidings had chilled even her baby-heart, and then she turned to her dolls and her dogs for the toleration elsewhere denied her. It was a hard lot for any child, especially hard for like little Gwen, with her vivid imagination, her impulsiveness, her bright impetuosity.

"You will harm the child by your coldness, Maria," expostulated the butler one day. "She's a lovely little creature. Why can't you love her for her mother's sake and for her own?"

"I can't, John. Sometimes I loathe her."

"Her lot is hard enough at best. Let us be tender to her."

But Mrs. Quillet only shook her head. These expostulations had no influence upon her to change her.

Yet the housekeeper, bearing in her mind always

a vague hope that the squire might some day adopt little Gwen, bestowed great thought upon her future training.

For some years the child played in the lonely gardens and upon the moor with her dolls and her dogs, but when she was seven years old Mrs. Quillet answered an advertisement and succeeded in engaging for the little waif an experienced and accomplished governess, a gentlewoman by birth and education, who came to Lonsmoor to reside, and who was paid a liberal salary out of the butler's funds.

The child was introduced to Miss Granger as the daughter of a poor lady who had died at Lonsmoor soon after Gwen's birth. It was not until a year or two later, by which time the governess had become deeply attached to her young charge, that Miss Granger heard from one of the maid-servants, whom Mrs. Quillet still employed, that little Gwen was the offspring of a vagrant woman who had given birth to the child at Lonsmoor, and who had subsequently perished in a snow-storm on the moors.

Had Miss Granger been informed of her pupil's origin at the outset, she would probably have declined the engagement. A lady herself, bred to the regard of caste, the charge of a small social outcast was not likely to be agreeable to her. But now, however, pity was added to her love for the child, and she gave to little Gwen a tenderness and affection that were almost maternal. In the warmth and sunshine of her care, the child found the first happiness her poor little chilled soul had ever known.

Miss Granger remained at Lonsmoor several years, instructing Gwen in all womanly accomplishments as well as in the solid branches of learning. Then, when the girl most needed her, the governess departed to marry a curate, to whom she had been twenty years betrothed, their united savings at last permitting them to join their hands and lives.

The Quillet, after due deliberation, and still cherishing their vague hope that Squire Markham might some day look with favour upon his grandchild and adopt her legally, sent their charge to a finishing-school in Paris—most to a cheap institution which would seem suited to their means, but to an expensive, first-class pensionnat, with able teachers in every department, with spacious gardens, and with all the refinements and luxuries which distinguish the homes of the wealthy and cultivated.

And these things cost a small fortune yearly, making frightful inroads upon the Quillet purse.

In this establishment were gathered the daughters of English and Russian nobles. A few French girls, one or two Italians, assisted to make up the limited number of pupils received at this Pensionnat De Lorraine.

Miss Gwendoline Winter would by no means have been admitted into this aristocratic circle but for letters which she had brought from Miss Granger—now Mrs. Myer—and from the good rector at Pesthouse, who took a lively interest in our young heroine.

Miss Winter remained at the Paris pensionnat three years, going through the highest courses of study, and carrying off the gold medal of honour over a dozen competitors.

She was perfect in her knowledge of French, German and Italian, was a brilliant musician, an artist of decided merit. She possessed a voice whose powers were only equalled by its culture. Nature had given her genius, a keen, bright intellect, a noble soul—all splendid gifts—as if to compensate her for what had been denied.

"Ma foi!" said Madame de Lorraine to herself, upon the day when this her favourite pupil was to leave Paris for England, "she will create a furore in English society. She will marry a peer. With her beauty, her genius, there is nothing short of royalty to which she might not aspire. I shall search the English court journals for news of her!"

And this girl whom Madame thus eulogized was a social outcast! A nameless creature, whose very origin was a mystery! She who seemed made for courtly drawing-rooms was the protégée of an old Yorkshire housekeeper and butler! Surely nature had mocked her!

During Gwendoline's three years at the Pensionnat De Lorraine she had not visited England. She knew nothing of her own history, but supposed that she was well born and an orphan. She vaguely supposed herself a poor and distant relative of Squire Markham, and that she had been educated by his kindness, and that she was to become the mistress of his home.

There had been much to foster this belief. She had spent her early years at Lonsmoor, where her position had been something better than that of mere dependent.

Mrs. Quillet, over bearing in mind her maturity, had treated her with scrupulous respect; had appeared to regard her as a superior; had bought for her dainty garments; had assigned to her, not Miss

Markham's former rooms, but a pleasant, handsomely furnished chamber, among those assigned to superior class guests; and had served her, if with little affection, with the more attentiveness.

And when her three years at the pensionnat had been very expensive, and the girl could not in her heart believe that the Quillet had done so much for her, since they had told her long ago that she was not of their blood.

She knew that Squire Markham was travelling during all these years. To her he was a sort of hero, a princely kind of uncle, or elderly relative, who wished money without stint upon her, and who would return by and by to his old home, when she could cheer his age with the exercises of her accomplishments, and give to him the tender love of a daughter.

And, with these romantic dreams in her seventeen-year-old head, Gwendoline Winter looked forward to her return to Lonsmoor with impatience and delight.

The day that had been appointed for her journey to England came, as we have indicated, a faultless day in June—the June preceding the December in which Squire Markham took his sudden resolve to revisit Lonsmoor.

In the months that were to intervene between that pleasant June and the squire's return in the ensuing February through what strange experiences was poor young Gwendoline to pass! How crowded were those months to be to her with events! What tragedy they held in their brief scope for her young life!

At an early hour, directly after the pensionnat breakfast, Gwendoline bade adieu to her school-fellows, with whom she had been intensely popular. Then she visited her governess one by one, and finally appeared in the private apartment of Madame De Lorraine, in full travelling costume. She expected every moment the arrival of the person, who was to take charge of her upon her journey home. Mrs. Quillet had written that a suitable person would be sent for Miss Winter, and who the "suitable person" might be puzzled Miss Winter anxiously.

"Perhaps your guardian will come himself," suggested Madame De Lorraine; "this mysterious guardian of yours, my dear, whom you have never seen? It is nearly time for his arrival, if you are to take the morning train."

Gwendoline was growing anxious and impatient. Eagerness to enter upon her new life and regret at leaving the old were contending within her when a flare rolled into the courtyard below, and a minute later a servant entered with the announcement that Madame Quillet waited in the reception-room.

"Madame Quillet?" being only a housekeeper—an upper servant—Madame De Lorraine did not go down to her. Indeed, there was brief time now for an interview. Gwendoline was pressed to Madame's heart in a tender embrace, and the girl turned away, blinded by her sudden tears, and went out into the passage. Then, hearing Mrs. Quillet's voice below bidding some one hasten Miss Winter, or they would lose the train, she sped down the stairs and hurried into the reception-room.

CHAPTER VI.

Mrs. Quillet was sitting in an easy-chair in a most uneasy attitude when Gwendoline entered. The woman rose at once and made a very low bow, and then looked beyond the girl with a visible impatience.

Seventeen years had greatly changed the old housekeeper. Her face was withered and wrinkled, her hair was quite gray, but her form was upright still, and her eyes as keen as they had been in her youth. She was more prim and reserved than of old, and she seemed like one who broods always over some recent sorrow. In truth, she mourned still for her lost Miss Constance, whom she had nursed in infancy, and who had been to her as her own child. And of late she problem of Gwendoline's future had begun to distress her. The mystery of the girl's existence, the sorrow and the bitter shame of that fatal winter seventeen years ago, were pressing very heavily upon her this morning, and she dreaded to see her charge, and reiterated in her own soul that wish of long ago that the child had died in her early years!

It was quite plain that the good dame did not recognize the girl, and a bright smile chased away Gwendoline's tears as she exclaimed:

"Don't you know me, Mrs. Quillet?—dear Nurse Quillet? Don't you know little Gwen?"

Mrs. Quillet started back in amazement.

Was this "little Gwen"—Constance Markham's nameless child? The girl, with her royal splendour of loveliness, her rare and radiant beauty? This "little Gwen?"

The girl laughed again at her surprise, and bestowed upon her a warm embrace, the old woman submitting in a sort of stupefied silence.

Then a porter announced that the driver of the

Sacre was impatient, and the two hurried down to the courtyard and entered the vehicle, and were driven rapidly towards the station.

And throughout the drive the old housekeeper scarcely removed her gaze from the girl's countenance. Its beauty startled her. "She was like the hen who has hatched a swan. What was she to do with this young creature? What life had she to offer her? She began to think that in twining the girl as a lady she had committed a terrible mistake. She repressed the groan that rose to her lips, and set her mouth in a grim and hard expression.

For the girl was nameless, of shameful origin, and unless the squire should adopt her or leave her something in his will she would have to earn her own living. And how could she battle with the world? Why, she looked like some petted young heiress—she had a certain hauteur of carriage—she looked every inch the nobly born aristocrat—and what was she?

Constance Markham had been beautiful, with dark eyes and hair. This girl was fair, with straight, Greek features, and massive, bronze-coloured hair rippling away from a broad, low forehead. Her eyes were like purple pansies, large and dark, passionate yet tender, full of sombre shadows and golden lights, sweet, proud eyes that once seen could never be forgotten.

Her face was proud and sweet also, agitated and bright. Her small head was poised gracefully and somewhat thoughtfully upon a slender white throat. She was not tall, being scarcely of medium height, but she was very slim and exquisitely graceful, and she carried herself as a young duchess might have done. She was thoroughbred, gentle, refined and cultured, and she was without impulsive and impetuous, warm-hearted and romantic.

Mrs. Quillet would have liked better to find her plain even to ugliness. If necessity should compel Gwendoline to earn her own living this alluring beauty might prove her ruin.

"With her origin, with her history," thought the old housekeeper, "her life should be quiet and obscure. But she is a brilliant young creature, and her mother's fate is likely to be hers also. Why didn't she die?"

Mrs. Quillet's silence and grim, dissatisfied manner did not trouble Gwendoline. In the pleasure and excitement of her drive she scarcely noticed them.

They arrived at the station in good time and obtained seats in a first-class compartment.

There being other occupants, the conversation between Mrs. Quillet and her charge was brief and commonplace.

The boat was in waiting at Calais and they went aboard at once.

Mrs. Quillet was ill upon the voyage and retreated to the stuffy, crowded little cabin, while Gwendoline, who was not ill, sat upon the deck, regarding the crowd of people, the water, and the chalk-cliffs of Dover with a strange delight.

"I seem to be just beginning life," she thought, with the enthusiasm of seventeen. "The world looks all new to me to-day!"

No incident marked the voyage, and they landed at Dover and took the train for London, arriving at the small family hotel in the city at which the Quillets always stopped upon their infrequent visits to London.

Here the old housekeeper, divided in her opinions as to what was due to her charge, procured a private sitting-room and two bedrooms.

"We've brought her up as a lady," the good dame muttered to herself, "and now we'll have to treat her as a lady. I could no more ask the child to share my bedroom than I could fly. And as to taking her down to the coffee-room to eat, with all those mercantile people to stare at her, that is impossible. Heaven only knows if we've done right in bringing her up as we have, but we can't undo now what we've done."

So dinner was eaten in the private sitting-room. Mrs. Quillet hesitated about taking her place at the table, with an uncomfortable dread of taking liberties with this high-bred, aristocratic young lady, but Gwendoline would not sit down until she had dined so, and she was forced to yield.

"You are as wilful as ever, Princess," said the old housekeeper, with a faint smile. "You will rule us all at Lonsmoor, I foresee."

The name "Princess," by which Gwendoline had been known in her earliest years had clung to her ever since. It was not easy for the Quillets to change their habit after her christening, and she was "Princess" still to the worthy old couple. The name suited her well. Her nature was royally grand and noble—her beauty royally splendid.

When the dinner-things had been removed the girl approached the housekeeper with something of yearning in her face. She longed to kiss her—to tell her that she was glad to see her, to express some-

thing of the affection that filled her heart toward this nurse and guardian of her earliest years; but Mrs. Quillet's countenance was cold and forbidding, and Gwendoline sighed, walked on to the window, and then sat down again.

It was impossible, even to our warm-hearted, impulsive young heroine, to utter words of affection to one so frigid as Mrs. Quillet now chose to be.

"Are you not satisfied with me, Mrs. Quillet?" said Gwendoline, after a little silence.

"Satisfied?" repeated the old woman, with a start. "Why should I not be satisfied? You are a lady, Miss Gwendoline. It is not for me to be dissatisfied with you."

"I shall be glad to see dear old Lonsmoor again," said Gwendoline, thoughtfully. "Is my guardian at home now?"

"Your—what?"

"My guardian—Squire Markham, you know. How odd that I should never in my life have seen him! Is he at Lonsmoor?"

"Squire Markham is still abroad," replied the housekeeper, dryly.

"Strange he has been abroad so many years," said Gwen, meditatively. "How I long to see him! I hope he'll come home soon. I mean to devote myself to him, Nurse Quillet. I will be a daughter to him. He shall never regret the expense he has lavished upon me."

The housekeeper smiled oddly, but a displaced expression showed itself in her eyes.

"If you can win the squire's liking, Miss Gwendoline," she said, "you'll do a fine thing for yourself. But, in my opinion, you won't get the chance. He has lived abroad nearly seventeen years, and I think he'll die in some of those farthest countries."

"If he never comes back, Mrs. Quillet, what is to become of me?" asked the girl, gravely, with a keen, questioning gleam in the housekeeper's eyes.

"God alone knows?" and the old woman groaned involuntarily.

"What do you mean?"

"Nothing. If the squire comes home try to win his liking. If he doesn't come, why you'll stay on at Lonsmoor, Miss Gwendoline, and live in seclusion, as becomes an unpractical young woman."

"And so I am to live in seclusion," said Gwendoline, sighing. "I've had such delightful dreams of my new acquaintances, visits, pleasures; but never mind. I shall be contented, I suppose. And my guardian will come home soon; I am sure of it. We'll look on the bright side. I shall find something to do at Lonsmoor, and I shall not be lonely."

After a little further conversation the young girl said good night and retired to her own room. Long after her bright head had pressed her pillow in sleep the old housekeeper sat in the little parlour, face to face with the great problem of Gwendoline's future.

She had brought up the girl as a lady. Now what was she to do with her?

"I could not do otherwise than educate her," she thought, "even though the master would do nothing for her, and has never even noticed her existence, and though he has never allowed one penny for her support and education. I could never have suffered Miss Constance's child grow up in ignorance. I could never have made a servant of her, nor a companion for myself. There was always the possibility, too, and it's less a possibility now than it was seventeen years ago, that the master might pity her and adopt her. Whether John and I were wise in educating her as we have done, we shall find out, I suppose. Meanwhile, she is not suited for a governess, even if she could get a situation, with that face of hers. It would never do to put her to the millinery or dressmaking. No, she must go to Lonsmoor. But in what capacity?"

How strange it seemed to her that she had never considered these questions before.

"The bailiff's family will think it very odd that I should keep her at Lonsmoor as a young lady," she said to herself, uneasily. "But they have no power to send her away, even if they don't like her presence there. People may look askance at her. The rector wrote a nice letter to Madame De Lorraine about her three years ago, but he would not bring his daughters to visit her. No one will look kindly upon her. She does not suspect one syllable concerning her origin. How long can she remain ignorant of what people whisper among themselves concerning her vagrant mother? If I had any place to send her to, I'd never take her to Lonsmoor—never! But she must go there, and I must watch over her."

With this resolve the housekeeper went to bed, but she could not sleep. She wished now that she had educated the child for a governess, and not allowed her to return to Lonsmoor. She wished that she had left her as under-governess in Madame De Lorraine's pensionnat. She wished many vain things during that long, dreary night, and was glad when the day

dawned and she could lose her thoughts in bodily activity.

Gwendoline arose early and came out into the sitting-room in her gray travelling-costume, as bright and fair as the morning. She greeted the housekeeper affectionately, and they sat down to breakfast together.

Directly after the meal, a cab was ordered, and the two proceeded to the railway-station.

They secured a first-class compartment to the moor in the mail train, and were presently whirling northward.

They arrived at Penistone before dusk. As they emerged from the station they met the old butler, who was in waiting with the carriage. He bowed low before the vision of grace and beauty which Gwendoline presented, and looked the admiration and satisfaction he did not otherwise express.

"I am glad to get home from foreign parts," said Mrs. Quillet, following the young girl into the carriage and motioning her husband also to enter.

"I should think the squire would get tired of foreign languages and foreign dishes. Is all well at home, John?"

"All well, Princess—I mean Miss Gwendoline's—room are ready, as you ordered the maids."

They drove to Lonsmoor in a little over an hour. Miss Winter was shown up by Mrs. Quillet herself to a handsome suite of rooms overlooking the gardens. Into these rooms had been gathered various adornments and appurtenances calculated to please their new proprietor. Before leaving home the housekeeper had put them in perfect order. There were lace curtains at the windows, blooming plants in the balconies, easy-chairs, book-cases well filled with choice books, the grand piano which had belonged to Constance Markham, pictures and statuettes of rare merit, work-tables, drawing materials, an easel, and various other articles likely to afford pleasure or employment to Gwendoline.

There was a room, part parlour part library, a dressing-room, bedroom and bathroom. Had Gwendoline been the acknowledged heiress of Squire Markham, she could not have been better lodged. A maid was deputed to wait upon her. Her luggage, consisting of several trunks, had been sent up, and the girl had made a fresh and busy toilet and descended to the dining-room, guided by the maid.

There were two dining-rooms at Lonsmoor; one a state apartment, the other a small, pleasant room with an immense window looking out upon the moors. It was to the latter that Gwendoline had been conducted, and it was here her solitary dinner was served to her with considerable ceremony, the butler waiting upon her with due respect.

After she had finished her meal Gwendoline made her way to the house-keeper's room.

Mrs. Quillet had just completed her own solitary meal, and was reclining upon a couch, looking fatigued.

"Why didn't you let me dine with you, Nurse Quillet?" asked the girl. "That was the very first time I ever dined in the regular dining-room at Lonsmoor. I think I would rather go back to the old school-room where Miss Grainger and I shared our meals together."

"You are too old for the schoolroom now, Miss Gwendoline," said the housekeeper, in her cold, measured tones. "And it is not fitting that you should dine with me. There's a difference between us—"

She was interrupted by the entrance of the butler with a light. Behind him came two women, the bailiff Orkney and his son.

The former was gray-haired and elderly, a man of integrity and respectability, well worthy the trust which the squire had reposed in him.

The latter was a scapegrace youth of some five-and-twenty years, who had caused his father a great deal of trouble. He was black-haired and black-eyed, burly of figure, with a red, heavy, and sensual countenance. He had been up to London for the last year or two, engaged in "sowing wild oats;" but his father had recently paid his bills on condition that he should return home and settle into business habits, and Claxton Orkney had agreed so to do. Father and son had come to Lonsmoor together had entered the house to speak to Mrs. Quillet.

At sight of Gwendoline both bowed unconsciously, and then looked at the Quillets in surprise.

"Miss Winter, this is the bailiff, Mr. Orkney," said the butler, "and Mr. Claxton Orkney."

Gwendoline acknowledged the introduction, and then, in obedience to a gesture of Mrs. Quillet, quitted the room.

"Miss Winter?" repeated the bailiff. "Who is she? A guest of yours, Mrs. Quillet?"

"She's a beauty," said young Orkney, in his thick voice, his blackeyes gleaming with admiration. "A regular stunner! Who is she, Quillet?"

(To be continued.)



[YATES LEARNS A LESSON.]

JOSEPH YATES'S TEMPTATION.

"Deposit money all right? Fifteen minutes to closing."

"Twenty-five," said Joseph Yates, looking up at the dusty old clock that never varied five minutes the year round. "And here it is in the four packages."

Peter Gale ran it over briefly. Yates could not tell why, but these were always times of trial for him. If he should make a miscount some day! And it always seemed as if Gale suspected him of keeping something back.

A hard, sharp, shrewd man was Peter Gale, though there wasn't a firm in the City that stood higher than that of Gale and Co. Mr. Fielding, the company, travelled the greater part of the time, and Gale managed the indoor affairs.

It was all right. Gale gave a brusque nod.

"There's those invoices must be made out to-night."

"Yes, sir."

"There's no sense in such an endless string of holidays, that stop business and get men into lazy habits."

Yates glanced at the clock again. Perhaps the master understood the hint, for he went off grumbling, and the man was left with a good half-day's work before him; for on Saturday as well everything must be ready for the morning.

He was a rapid and true accountant. Peter Gale knew his value well. He felt that he was worth a higher salary, but business had not been over brisk for the last year or two, although "old Gale" was making money fast enough.

Something fluttered down to the floor. Why, what was this? Barton Casey's cheque for one hundred pounds. Yates struck his hand to his forehead in terror. How had he forgotten that?

Right in the press of business, an hour ago, Casey had rushed in on his way to the railway.

"I'm off to Ireland," he explained; "and though that bill of mine doesn't fall due until the second of January, I'd rather take it up and have it off my mind. Here, receipt this, Yates. Quick as lightning, man!"

He had laid it aside to explain to Mr. Gale. Then in the hurry of making up the deposit it had slipped out of his mind.

He was tired out mentally and physically. Every nerve had been stretched and strained. The day's work was hard enough, but to do two in one was doubly severe. So his thoughts were slow and half terrified as he stood a moment thinking what had better be done. To confess this negligence would be to almost ruin him in Mr. Gale's estimation. And just when he needed to ask a favour, too!

He went on with his figures, trying to think of a plausible way out of the difficulty, but Gale returned and night was coming on. He slipped the cheque in his pocket; there was no entry of it made in the day's ledger. He must trust to luck to make it right on Monday.

Gale went round in his stealthy, suspicious fashion. Yates balanced his long lists, made entries, sorted papers. His master chuckled a little under his breath at his slave's rapidity. It would have taken him a week to get through with that amount of work correctly. He stood with the safe door open waiting for the books.

Joseph Yates had meant to get the cheque in the safe somehow. A cold perspiration broke out on his forehead, for now it hung over him like a horror. The door shut with its sharp, mysterious click. Yates reached for his overcoat, fumbled awkwardly, then turned:

"Mr. Gale—"

"What now?" was the gruff rejoinder.

"Mr. Gale—" and Yates cleared his throat—

"I wanted to ask if you could—or would—advance me a trifle from my month's salary?"

His eyes were downcast now, and the lines round the mouth twitched nervously under the soft brown moustache. He had nerved himself to ask the favour for the sake of wife and children. For himself—well, he would have starved sooner.

"I don't do those things, Yates, and you know it. I pay a man fairly when his work is done, and not a day before, and I never ask any man to pay me until my money is due. I know you want it for some stupid nonsense, but poor men like you had better save their money. This holiday business is bad for poor men like you."

He clipped off every word just as a chisel cuts bars of steel or iron, with a kind of merciless thud.

Yates turned without another word. Outside the street lamps were burning dimly. The storm was just beginning—fine sleet that blew out of the clouds in spiteful gusts. He pulled his coat collar over his ears, for the bitter wind nipped them, and almost flayed the skin on his cheeks where the curling beard did not keep him warm.

He went stumbling along, thinking. What had he done that misfortune should follow him, while such men as Gale, who wrung the life-blood out of their fellow-creatures, prospered and hoarded their wealth? Gale without a child in the world, and he longing for a crown to buy his little ones some small gift. Oh! what cruel straits there were in this life; what narrow, pitiless souls to make them severer still. Was there any truth in his boyhood's lessons in his manhood's beliefs? He had never turned his face from any poor man; he had been so glad to help one and another to send gifts at this festive season. Was there any Heaven that took these things into account? Was there on this earth "good will to men?"

He was not congratulating himself upon his past good deeds. His mood was too faithless and bitter just now, and he had done his from the delight of giving pleasure rather than settled principles.

For ten years he had been a happy and prosperous man, comfortable in circumstances, generous in heart. During that time he had married, and three children had been born to him. Then came misfortunes, losses, adversity. He had paid his debts, given up his home and its pretty, simple luxuries, and retired to a lodging. Suppose, instead, he had looked out for himself, cheated right and left, and been a rich man to-day. The world might have sneered a little, but it would not have passed him by contemptuously, neither would his wife and children be enduring privation.

And a shiver passed over him, but it was not altogether cold. Here in his pocket were a hundred pounds, about which there would not be a question asked for days. He could indorse it easily enough. It was more than half a year's salary, and looked like a fortune to him. He could go somewhere and take a fresh start. He was tired of being ground down to the earth.

"Evenin' paper," sang out a shrill little voice at his elbow. "Oh, please, I want a little money so much!"

"So do I, child!" he answered, almost roughly, pushing him away.

A hundred pounds. A few years ago it would have appeared such a trifle! A few years ago he would have thrust a shilling in this little beggar's cold fingers. Not a penny for pleasure or charity.

He had been so scrupulously honest, so careful of his good name, what had it brought him? Next week there would be quantities of money coming in. Old Gale was slow at figures, and he could manipulate the books a little, arrange it so that several weeks would elapse before the fraud would be discovered, resign next Friday, and be off to a more prosperous life. Why, how easy it was to be a thief! This one hundred pounds in his pocket had paved the way. He would consider it a loan merely, and presently pay it back to old Gale.

Well, here he was. He stamped his feet, and stumbled up the stairs. The family on the lower floor never indulged in a hall light save when they expected company. But Bessie opened her door.

"Oh, Joe! I thought something had happened. Why, how cold and wet you are," and she kissed the frosty face.

"I walked up."

"In this storm? Oh, Joe!"

"Yes; I spent my last sixpence for lunch."

He uttered this in a moody, despairing manner. "But why did you not take more change this morning?"

He made no reply, but taking off his coat stood before the grate-fire worn and gloomy.

Bessie looked so bright and cheery in her crimson merino gown, with crimped cambric ruffles at throat and wrists, and a few geranium leaves in her fair hair. And the room was so cozy and inviting with the unsalable relics of former prosperity and Bessie's quick eye and fairy fingers. His slip-pers were warming in the firelight, and his chintz-covered easy-chair gave him a welcome.

"You are very tired."

The soft cheek was pressed against his, and the loving arms were round his neck.

He made no answer to the question of voice, or still tenderer question of eyes.

"Has it been a very hard day?"

"Rather," in a slow, weary tone.

"Then you have earned your holiday. Come and have a cup of tea, and we will talk it over."

"Earned it! Yes. But a man like Gale thinks you a mere engine. Not a pleasant word to-night, not a cordial wish. If he could have his way there wouldn't ever be a Sunday. It is true and honourable souls that suffer, and whose place can no more be found. Why, we have dropped out of memory and love and friendship as completely as if we had committed some fearful crime. If I had paid half my debts, kept my house and taken a fresh start, the world would have thought better of me to-day."

"You are tired and discouraged. Come and have some supper, and then you shall see what I have made for the little ones' holiday present."

"Poor babies!"

"Oh, we have planned to be merry enough," and she laughed gleefully.

Many a time she had beguiled him with her pretty ways, but to-night he could not smile. She broiled him some slices of rare beef, toasted his bread, gave him a saucer of canned fruit, and chatted pleasantly.

When he stayed so late the children always had their supper and were put to bed. But to-night Bessie wished they were up to help her woo Joseph from his despondency and bitterness.

"Bessie," he began abruptly, as he rose from the table, "let me run over your house account book. How do we stand?"

"Don't bother your head with it to-night. I want to show you the children's gifts."

"I'll see them afterwards."

She studied his face for a moment. Something quite new had come to it. A kind of hard, desperate resolve, shadowed by a secret gloom. Seldom had she seen him in such a reticent mood.

"It has been a hard month with us," and her smile was unconsciously sad. "There was the coal and the doctor's bill for little Bits"—the baby's pet name—"and the barrel of flour—one gets so much nicer flour by the barrel for the same money."

She said this lingeringly as she brought him her small housekeeping journal, kept in the fashion of a methodical business man. He looked over the entries and disbursements for three months back.

"You have no washerwoman, Bessie."

"No, I can wash very nicely myself. It makes less trouble and saves something."

He groaned aloud. His darling Bessie, of whom he used to be so tender!

"We shall owe nearly six pounds out of the month's wages."

"Oh, my darling, we can make it up when summer comes. I am well and strong, and I can't help hoping for better times."

"Better times! Oh, Bessie! When one begins to go behindhand—"

"I shall try to be more economical."

"My poor dear girl, you make a slave of yourself now."

"There! Put the bothering thing away. Now look at my gifts."

She took a large parcel from the closet and unfasted it with an air of triumph.

"There are dresses for Nelly and Rose, made out of my blue poplin that you liked so well. No one would dream that it had been washed; and I made the old velvet do duty again. And are not these stylish Normandy caps? Then I've crocheted them mittens and leggings. I like to see them look pretty on Sunday, and they do so love to go to Sunday school. And here is Bits's suit—"

"Which cannot be an old dress turned."

"No, it is a Scotch plaid circular I had years ago. Isn't it pretty? And look at these shoes!"

Two pairs of dainty baby boots, of thick, pearl-coloured cloth, bound in blue for one and scarlet for the other.

"You did not make them?"

"Yes, I did; out of scraps left of my cloak, with the tops of those old French boots of yours for soles. Am I not a genius?"

"Oh, Bessie!" and he hid his face.

"And look at my dolls!"

They were almost as good as "boughten ones," in their gay dresses. She had marked eyes, nose and mouth, given them pink cheeks and a pretty substitute for hair.

"Little midgits, they will be wild with delight!"

"Oh, Bessie, I was thinking of them to-night. We were never so poor before. Not even a penny to spend!"

"It is hard. I shall never be converted to the idea that rich people often advance of poverty being the happiest state of life, and poor people

being free from care. The sweet sleep of the labourer is so often quoted, but I wonder how many of them lie awake, planning how they can make one pound do the work of two! But we have each other and health, and faith in Heaven—"

"Bessie," he interrupted, hoarsely, "how much does a woman love? How much would she forgive—endure?"

"To the end. All things, Joseph—poverty, trial, sacrifice."

"And shame, disgrace?"

She was clinging to him, trembling in every pulse.

"Oh, not that!" she cried. "Better the bitterest poverty. It is my one great comfort that you never did anything dishonourable. I would rather be poor as we are to-day than to think you had wronged one living soul."

"Yes, to be sure!" he responded, weakly, and with a forced laugh. "No one can say that."

He could never tell her how easy the villainy looked to him, how certain the prosperity seemed at the end. Oh, Heaven! he could not stay here, studied by her clear eyes, kissed by her pure lips. Why, it would end by making an honest beggar of him!

"You are not going out again, Joe, darling—"

"Bessie, I must—for a little while. It is business—something that may better us a bit, if I should be successful."

"Joe—"

"There, sweet wife! Heaven knows you are an angel! I won't be gone long."

Somehow she had not the will to detain him. She crouched over the fire, listened to the storm, and prayed—it was all she could do—for her dear Joe, whose heart and hands had always been kept clean hitherto.

The storm was fierce enough. It chimed in with his desperate mood. In a month maybe he would be an outsider, a thief, a fugitive, skulking in darkness and dread, a dishonoured man. On in the darkness! He must think it out now—decide.

"Evening paper! Oh, sir, please buy a paper!"

There was a lampost at the corner, and Joseph Yates caught the poor little wail by the shoulder.

"You're the boy I met down in Pine Street," he exclaimed. "Don't you know you cannot sell papers this time of night? Run home out of the storm."

"Oh, sir! mother—she's starving! And there's a great window full of things down yonder that look so good—so good! Why, the very smell of 'em's a feast. I can't steal, but, oh, won't some one give me a few pennies?"

"Here," he said; "let us try. We will both beg. They are making ready for a great feast. Come along!"

He pulled him almost roughly by the arm, over the sleepy steps, through the open door, into the light, the warmth, and the spicy fragrance.

"Will you save a poor, perishing soul this night?" he asked, addressing the group. "Is the love of Heaven within you great enough to keep this child and his mother from starvation?"

They gathered around, and the story was soon told.

A small sum was speedily gathered—ten shillings—and the boy's joy found vent in tears and thanks.

"For, you see, I'm not used to selling papers, nor matches, and the other boys run me off. I'd do anything—but steal."

Joseph Yates looked at the pitiful little mite. Not ragged, nor with the vagrant air of wails in general. Why, what was there so oddly familiar about the face?

Somewhere it had peered at him with not quite the same look in the eyes, but rousing him to some other sentiment than that of pity.

They walked out together and went to a shop, where the boy displayed the prudence of a market woman.

"We've no fire," he said.

"I'll carry some wood," said Yates.

The shopkeeper tied a stout string around a great bundle, and Yates shouldered it.

On they trudged, up an alley finally, and to a room on the ground floor, clean, but poor and very scantily furnished.

"Oh, mother, mother! I've brought you something to eat, and wood to make a fire, and this gentleman—"

The child was sobbing on the bed, uttering broken sentences, and then laughing hysterically.

Joseph Yates began to build a fire in a mechanical way, thinking over his temptation, and whether Heaven had saved him.

"Oh, how can I ever thank you?" the woman began, presently.

"Don't," he said, huskily: "I have given nothing—nothing. I am almost a beggar myself, or perhaps worse."

"You may be poor, but you have a heart. And

poor little Will—it's been so hard for him. If he had only one friend!"

Then she raised herself suddenly, and an eager light shone in the sunken eyes.

"There is a man," she went on, slowly, "Peter Gale by name, in this city—a rich man. Did you ever hear of him?"

"Hear of him? I am his book-keeper," he answered, grimly.

"If I could see him! He might—"

Joseph Yates smiled bitterly.

"Don't count on him," he said. "He is as hard as the nether millstone."

"But if he knew he had a child—a son? He used to desire it so much."

The head fell back feebly, and the thin fingers grasped at the coverlet.

Yates looked at her in amazement.

He remembered now that he had heard some story about Gale's marriage years ago, and that his wife had left him.

He caught the child again and studied the thin face by the lamplight.

Yes, that was it—the likeness that had puzzled him so.

"His child!" he repeated, in a blind, dazed manner. "His son! And you are his wife?"

"Yes."

"The kettle boils," said Willie; "I'll make you some beef-tea. Oh, mother, mother! you will get well."

Peter Gale's wife and child! What were they doing here in beggary?

He helped the little boy prepare some nourishment for her, and presently he listened to a broken, disjointed story.

How she had been high-spirited, and they had disagreed, until one day she had renounced him and gone off in a fit of passion. And when her child was born, months afterwards, how she had triumphed in the entire possession of him.

She had a small fortune of her own, which had sufficed her until a year ago, when an unforeseen loss had swept it away.

Then she had sold furniture, jewels, sewed a little, but with her failing health she could not accomplish much.

She had come to London to stay with a friend, until she could decide upon her wisest course, for she was fearful that her injured husband would take the child and disown her.

Her friend had died suddenly a week after her arrival, and she had gone on in fear and suspense until, as it seemed now, death was near for herself.

"Will he be glad to have his child?" she moaned.

"Oh, if I knew—if I only knew."

He gave the poor thing hope, and left her much comforted. Then he went out in the street once more.

Bessie had watched the hours away in strange affright.

Never had she seen Joe in such a mood.

What had happened to him?

The fire wasted away to ashes.

She shivered and drew a shawl around her shoulders.

What if Joe's mind had met with some great strain, and he had gone off to self-destruction?—worse than that she could not think of him.

The clocks were striking nine.

There was a step on the stairs, and she opened the door.

Joe came in quietly, kissed her, took off his overcoat and his boots, and sank into his easy-chair. He was deathly pale now, with great shadows under his eyes.

"Joe!"

"Bessie, darling, have I acted like a brute—a fiend? I've been tempted by the evil one? I had made up my mind to be a thief, for I thought I saw no other way out of my wilderness. Don't cry out, Bessie; I am an honest man, and will go honestly to my grave. I could never be tempted again after having been snatched out of these depths."

She was crying at his feet.

He raised her, kissed her with solemn tenderness, and told her his story.

He put on his coat next morning and went to Mr. Gale's.

It was a dull, unpretending brick house, but warm and comfortable within.

The master sat over his lonely breakfast, his face grayer and sterner than ever.

Had he been thinking over old dreams, long since come to nothing?

"What now?" he said, gruffly, as Yates entered the room.

"This," answered Yates, and he laid the cheque beside his plate. "You see it came yesterday."

"And you—"

"It was accidental at first. I mislaid it in my hurry. I did not tell you then, because I wanted to ask a favour, and knew you would be angry at my carelessness. I put it in my pocket, and it became

Satan's temptation to me, Do you suppose this paltry hundred would have satisfied me? I know how easy I could make false entries, and repay myself the sum I am worth to you that your penuriousness keeps me out of. I went out in the storm last night, and fought as a man does for his life, and, with Heaven's help, conquered. I found a poor little stray, not yet nine years old, hawking papers, to keep himself and his sick mother from starvation. In his anxiety, even he refused to steal. And this child that saved me, and made it an utter impossibility ever to touch one penny of yours or any man's money that I have not honestly earned in—listen, Peter Gale—your son, your baby, born less than nine years ago, months after his mother had left your house.

"My child; my son; What trumped-up story is this?"

"Go and see for yourself—there, 12 James Court. The woman is dying."

Peter Gale's face took an ashen tint. He rose and tottered a few steps, shaking as if with an ague.

"Will you go with me, Yates? I—there are so many impostors. But I should know Margaret's face. Dying?"

What bitter memories surged up in that hard heart only Heaven knew. Yates took his arm and led him along.

"Here is the place—this door. You have no farther need of me. A man and his wife are best alone when they have a story to tell."

Joseph Yates went home again.

"I shall be discharged, of course," he said, to Bessie. "Peter Gale would never forgive such a thing. 'It's a hard winter, but I can't think Heaven will let us starve.'"

He went down to the counting-house on Monday and took his place at the desk.

Peter Gale came and laid Casey's cheque on his book without saying a word. He had changed greatly since Friday night, looked older, and broken, and fearful, as if suspicious that every one he met would pass judgment upon him.

"Yates," he said, at night, "stop a while, will you? That was my wife, and my child—my little boy," he added, with a curious tremble in his voice akin to tears. "I can't tell you about the old times when we were both at fault. Margaret's sorry enough now, and, Heaven knows, so am I. She can't last long, but I've brought her home, and the boy hangs after me and kisses me. I never know before."

He paused, and, after clearing his voice and drawing his coat-sleeve across his eyes, continued:

"Yates, I've been a hard master, I know, but you are a good man, and I couldn't spare you. I want you to stay and take charge, at five hundred pounds a year—will that do? And—I refused you your son on Friday—but here's a little gift to make up for you brought to me—oh, Yates, such a gift as one man seldom brings another. She might have starved before morning. I shall never forget—never, Heaven bless you, Yates—"

The old man turned away.

A few tears dropped on Yates's ledger.

He opened the folded paper.

It was a cheque for a hundred pounds!

A. W. D.

THE FAMOUS stone memorial pillar of the Moabitish king, Mosea, discovered some time since, has just been placed in the Jewish section of the Louvre. The administration purchased several fragments of this valuable monument which were in the possession of M. Clermont Ganneau. Some other pieces belonging to the English Exploration Society were kindly presented, and thus completed the surface, on which is engraved that considerable text. The monarch relates on it his wars with the Israelite princes, and the inscription corroborates the Bible account, confirming it in the most striking and unexpected manner.

THE DEATH is announced from Paris of Mdle. Dejazet, who was, it is said, the oldest actress in the world. She was born in 1793, appeared on the stage when she was five years old, and played before the Allied Sovereigns in Paris in 1816. In March, 1869, she was allowed a pension of 2,000 francs from the Emperor Napoleon's household. During the war she came to London. In the autumn of last year she had a benefit at the Théâtre Français, when all the principal actors and actresses of Paris performed for and with her. A little later she played at the Vaudeville, taking the part of a young man, the character in which she was most successful.

DISCOVERY OF AN ANCIENT CHINESE RELIC.—There has just been erected in Grappenhall Church an effigy of Sir Hugh Boydell, who flourished in the county of Cheshire in the 13th century. Some time ago the original effigy was discovered, supposed to be about six years old, and, owing to the process of decay, it was found to be minus its head and arms.

Mr. Warrington Wood, the sculptor, designed a model, and for this the missing parts were restored, and the completed figure has been erected in a niche in the chancel of Grappenhall Church.

HOW TO PREVENT COLDS.

If people were blessed with common sense and a little wholesome self-denial they might often escape severe colds and fevers by resolute measures adopted in season.

There is probably not a man, woman, or child who is not as often as once a year afflicted with severe cold, which ends in a cough or catarrh; and thousands there are who die every year of consumption, brought on by taking cold. He, then, who should discover a certain and effectual remedy for this complaint would be justly regarded as one of the greatest benefactors of the age. The writer does not profess to have discovered such a remedy, but he wishes to attest the truth of the following certain and effectual expedient for preventing a cold. A cold cannot be instantly cured; but if it can be prevented, it is of no importance to know how it may be cured.

A bad cold, like measles or mumps, or other similar ailments, will run its course of about ten days, in spite of what may be done for it, unless remedial means are employed within forty-eight hours of its inception. Many a useful life may be spared to be increasingly useful by cutting a cold short off in the following safe and simple manner. On the first day of taking a cold there is a very unpleasant sensation of chilliness. The moment you observe this, go to your room and stay there. Keep it at such a temperature as will entirely prevent this chilly feeling, even if it requires 100 degrees of Fahrenheit. In addition to this, put your feet in water half-leg deep, as hot as you can bear it, adding hot water from time to time, for a quarter of an hour, so that the water shall be hotter when you take your feet out than when you put them in. Then dry them thoroughly, and put on thick, warm woollen stockings, even if it be summer—for summer colds are most dangerous—and for twenty-four hours eat not an atom of food, but drink as largely as you desire of any kind of warm tea; and, at the end of that time, the cold will be entirely broken, without any medicine whatever.

ELEPHANT SLAUGHTER.

THE elephants are described as roaming about in large herds in the most tame and inoffensive fashion, almost harmless to man, for none have been shot for upwards of twelve months. There does not present such a large class of society in England, who advocate kindness to animals in all its forms, that we venture to predict that, when the baiting and shooting down of these semi-tame elephants occurs, the accounts will be received in England by the humane and thoughtful portion of the community with feelings the reverse of satisfactory. It seems a pity to destroy, for the sake of simple sport, such useful, intelligent animals as elephants.

In destroying tigers and other strictly wild and destructive beasts, the sportsman performs a public service, and this knowledge doubtless adds additional zest to the enterprise; but the wholesale destruction of these huge and valuable assistants to man, on the plea of sport, when their hunting and capture for domestication would be equally exciting and far more instructive, is a proceeding repugnant alike to the teachings of our flag and to our humane ideas of advanced civilization.

If the risk of life from the furious charge of a wounded bull elephant is required to establish the courage of their future king in the eyes of his Eastern Empire let some other plan be devised, and let his millions of half-civilized subjects practically associate his visit with recollections of mercy rather than with the wanton slaughter of animals almost idolized for their utility, and tractability—the most powerful, and yet the most docile creatures in the universe. Wanton waste brings woe to all.

The commercial loss, though large, in an elephant baited is not of so much consequence as the example. The wanton slaughter of buffaloes of late years on the American prairie, and of some deer in Canada, has already excited the action of their respective Governments, and nearly every State of the Union has been compelled to pass severe repressive game laws to prevent the extermination of many of the indigenous birds and beasts, and this, too, in a wild country with almost unlimited range.

THE witty Charles Monselet one of the men who know best how to say nothing quite agreeably—has

just brought out in Paris his "Années de Gaité," a book certified to be full of fun and of good spirits. It is a collection of facetious stories, in which, notwithstanding all that is facetious, Parisian existence is sketched from the life; not serious Parisian life, indeed, but such as we see on the Boulevard and in the Bois. Certain of the morsels which compose it contain ideas which would do well on the stage. The "Débats" cites one—The Sorrows of a Borrower—in which one gentleman constitutes himself guardian of another, who on the morrow is to send him a few hundred pounds and the world-behaviour goes so far as to fight a duel with some one who had cause of quarrel with the lender, lest the lender himself should, by death, be incapacitated from lending.

FACETIE.

VEILED SATIRE.

ROYAL ACADEMICIAN (after gazing with mute astonishment at the most abominable daub ever perpetrated by a man whose real vocation in life was to be a nobbler). "I tell you what, Stodge—happy thought! I'd sell it, if I were you"—Punch.

AN Elastic Step—The step from the sublime to the ridiculous.—Judy.

TIER, IDLE TIER.

The head of the statue of Prince Albert which has been executed for the memorial has been fixed. A contemporary says, "The Prince looks to the left of the Albert Hall." "Over the left?" "No wonder the statue has a scornful look with those vacant tiers in his eyes."—Fun.

IMPORTANT TO BONDHOLDERS.

A huge meeting of Turkish bondholders, held to determine the best course to be adopted with regard to the Turkish debt, has ended in an unmeted riot, in consequence of divided counsel and action. The Porte's victims evidently forget that the one thing needed to terminate the Turkish debt is English debt-termination.—Fun.

MEM. FOR THE BRIGHT EVENINGS (WHEN THEY COME).—Young ladies who are anxious to get settled should go for a quiet walk with any eligible parti—by daylight. This is the way to get a husband in a twinkling.—Judy.

ANGEL'S WIG.

Upon the death of a worthy baillie of Edinburgh his relations resolved to erect a monument to his memory.

They accordingly applied to a mason, and, among other directions, desired that he would represent an angel bearing the baillie to Heaven.

The mason set to work and chiselled out an alarming likeness of the deceased worthy. On the head of the angel he carved a wig similar to the baillie, which was the largest wig in the town council.

One of his relatives, on returning from London, went to inspect the subject of the sculpture. After musing some time over it, he asked the mason whom the lower figure was intended for.

"Oh, that's the angel lifting our old friend up to Heaven."

"The angel!" exclaimed the gentleman. "Who ever saw an angel wear a wig?"

"Did you ever see one without a wig?" retorted the artist.

This was unanswerable; so the monument was erected, and may be seen on the north side of the churchyard of the Gray Friars, to the wonderment of all beholders.

GENEROUS SELF-DENIAL.

HOSTESS: "You are not dancing, Mrs. Mirabel! I suppose you've given up such a frivolous amusement?"

MRS. MIRABEL (stout lady of considerable personal attractions): "Oh, dear, no! But—young men are scarce, and I don't think it's quite fair to the girls, you know"—Punch.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

A plaintiff, in a case in the Lord Mayor's Court the other day, described himself as "the inventor of white hair." We having always entertained the idea that an old gentleman named Time had something to do with the invention, beg to draw attention to what looks very like an infringement of patent.—Punch.

PRINTED JONES.

During the Mexican war, one of the newspapers hurriedly announced an important item of news from Mexico, that Gen. Pillow and thirty-seven of his men had been lost in a battle.

Some other paper informed the public not long ago, that a man in a brown suit was yesterday brought before the police court on a charge of having stolen a small ox from a lady's work-bag. The stolen property was found in his waistcoat pocket.

"A rat," says another paper, "descending the

river, came in contact with a steamboat, and so serious was the injury to the boat that great exertions were necessary to save it.

A paper once stated, "that the Russian General Raskinoffsky was found dead with a long word in his mouth."

It was, perhaps, the same paper that in giving a description of a battle between the Poles and Russians, said that "the conflict was dreadful, and the enemy was repulsed with great laughter."

Again: "A gentleman was yesterday brought up to answer a charge of having eaten a stage driver, for demanding more than his fare."

Some have objected to a sub-marine telegraph between America and Great Britain on the ground that there would be too many fish stories transmitted over the wires.

DIFFERENT OPINION.

"Madame," said a cross-tempered physician to a patient, "if women were admitted to paradise their tongues would make it purgatory."

"And some physicians, if allowed to practice there," replied the lady, "would make it a desert."

It is said that the Klamath country (California) jail consists of a live oak tree, with a staple and chain attached. It is well ventilated, and affords a good opportunity for the study of astronomy and the barometer, especially when blankets are scarce.

GIRES AND BRARDS.

Two young misses, discussing the qualities of some young gentlemen, were overheard thus:

No. 1. "Well, I like Charley, but he's rather girlish; he hasn't got the least bit of a beard."

No. 2. "I say Charley has got a beard, but he shaves it off."

No. 1. "No, he hasn't, either, any more than I have."

No. 2. "I say he has, too, and I know it, for it pricked my cheek."

It is a common practice for officers when under canvas to direct their beavers to partially dress them early in the morning while they are still in bed, so that they can enjoy their repose until the very moment when the tent is struck over their head. Mr. A— had always been accustomed to be so aided by his beaver as a bachelor. At length he took unto himself a wife. Early in the morning after the wedding, and while it was yet dark, the bride gave a start and exclaimed—"Willie, Willie, what is the matter? there is some one in the room, I am sure!" "Nonsense, dear, all fancies go to sleep," was the cry of the somnolent Willie. It was not, however, all fancy; for, when the happy couple rose, a stocking was on the foot of each.

JOHN BILLINGS says it has been observed that law is like a sieve; you may see through it, but you must be considerably reduced before you can get through it. But nobody ever got through a sieve without liquidating himself.

"What does Good Friday mean?" asked one Aberdeen boy of another. "You had better go home and read your 'Robinson Crusoe,'" was the withering reply.

The pickpockets have been complaining of the late cold weather. They say that while it lasted every man kept his hand in his own pockets.

A SHARP YOUTH.

The Shepherd's Bush boy can stand up with any other boy in the world against an accusation. The other day when a mother discovered sugar on the pantry shelf, she called to her boy and said:

"Some one has been stealing this sugar!"

"Is it possible?" he exclaimed, rolling his eyes in astonishment.

"Yes, it is possible, and the thief isn't far away."

"Aint he, Do, on suspect father?"

"No, I don't."

"Couldn't he be the cat, could it?" he inquired, glancing under the table in search of the feline.

"Cats don't eat sugar, young man."

"They don't?"

"No, sir; the thief is a boy about your size."

"He is? I'd just like to catch him in here once."

"If this sugar is disturbed again," she said, as she covered the box, "I know of a boy who'll get his jacket dusted."

"I wish you'd let me stay out of school and to see you catch and maul him."

And he went out to devour the other lumps.

WHY NOT?

COOK (come after situation): "By the bye, ma'am, is there a sink in your neighborhood? for I shouldn't like to give up my skating!"—Punch.

THE DOG-SHOW AT THE DAGHAM PALACE. Brown (owner of "Chimborazo," smarting under defeat): "Hang it all! To think of those two old women giving the first prize to Popocatepetl, and barely commending Chimborazo! Do you call that judging?"

Jones (owner of "Popocatepetl" generous under victory): "It's all fair enough, my dear sir. If you recollect, at the Derby dog-show last week, the

very same two gentlemen who judged to-day, gave the first prize to Chimborazo, and took no more notice of poor Popocatepetl than if he'd been a tomato."—Punch.

A PRACTICAL WITNESS.

A lawyer retained in a case of assault and battery was cross-examining a witness in relation to the force of blow struck.

"What kind of a blow was given?" asked the lawyer.

"A blow of the common kind."

"Describe the blow."

"I am not good at description."

"Show me what kind of a blow it was."

"I cannot."

"You must."

"I won't."

The lawyer appealed to the Court. The Court told the witness that if the counsel insisted upon his showing what kind of a blow it was, he must do so.

"Do you insist upon it?" asked the witness.

"I do."

"Well, then, since you compel me to show you, it was this kind of blow!" at the same time suiting the action to the word, knocking over the astonished disciple of Cook and Littleton.

FALLEN LEAVES.

Out in the frosty sunshine

The woods are crisp and sore,

Flashed with the lingering ghostly gleam

Of the sunset of the year;

Aloft on gusty headland

The oak, like a smouldering pyre,

Yet glows in the breast of the Norther

With a stifled and sullen fire.

But the beauty and grace and gladness

Of the woodland is waste and dead—

Her music is hushed, her bloom despoiled,

Her laughter and light are fled!

The winds flit by with an eerie sigh,

And the brook in the hidden dell

Tinkles athwart the silence

Like a far-away elfin bell.

Alas, for the fleeting glory

Of the Autumn, bright and brief!

For the dreams that are dead with the

faded red

Of the fallen flower and leaf!

We weep in passionate sadness

The withered woods to-day,

With a keener grief and longing

For the joy that is gone for aye!

For we know that the winter passeth—

That the leaves and the flower again

Will wake to the balmy kisses

Of the vernal sun and rain;

But never again, in sun or rain,

Shall the heart's sweet hopes unfold,

That, fading, fall with the fallen leaves

Of that Autumn time of old! E. A. B.

GEMS.

TRUTH is clothed in white. But a lie comes forth with all colours of the rainbow.

RUINS.—The ruins of old friendship are a more melancholy spectacle than those of desolate palaces. They exhibit the heart that was once lighted up with joy all damp and deserted, and haunted by those birds of ill omen that only nestle in ruins.

FALSEHOOD.—Lying supplies those who are addicted to it with a plausible apology for every crime, and with a supposed shelter from every punishment. It tempts them to rush into danger from the mere expectation of impunity, and when practised with frequent success it teaches them to confound the gradations of guilt, from the effects of which there is, in their imaginations, at least, no escape, and common protection. It corrupts the early simplicity of youth; it blasts the fairest blossoms of genius, and will most assuredly counteract every effort by which we may hope to improve the talents and mature the virtues of those whom it infects.

HOPS.—The history of the introduction of the hop into general use, as given in our public records, is by no means devoid of interest. It is stated that in the fourth year of King Henry VI. (1425-26) an information was laid against a person for putting "into beer" an unwholesome weed called an "hoppi;" and that in the same reign Parliament was petitioned against "that wicked weed called hops." In the reign of Henry VIII. their use seems to have been fully esta-

lished, although the brewer of the Royal household was prohibited from using it in his ale. In the Statute Book for 1553 the cultivation of hops is distinctly sanctioned; and in 1574 Reynolde Scot published a black-letter treatise, with woodcuts, expressly on the cultivation of hops, which is called "A Perfitte Plat Forme of a Hoppe Garden." In 1603 English-grown hops were extensively used, as appears from an Act of James I., and, although their use was petitioned against, and nominally condemned in the same reign, this prohibition was but little attended to.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

WAT PUDDING.—Boil a pint of milk, mix two tablespoonful of flour with a little milk, add a large tablespoonful of molasses, and pour the boiling milk upon it, stirring it all the time; when this is done, if not perfectly smooth, strain it through a fine colander. Butter a pie-dish, pour in the mixture, and bake for about half an hour.

FRICASEED RABBIT.—Cut your rabbit in pieces, wash it, and put it in a stewpan with three gills of water, season it with salt, and very highly with pepper, a little mace, and powdered cloves; let it stew slowly, and when nearly done add three ounces of butter, rolled in flour. If you wish a brown fricassee the flour should be browned before it is rolled with the butter; if it is to be a white fricassee, after you stir in the flour and butter add a gill of cream.

FRENCH STEWED RABBIT.—Cut a rabbit in pieces, wash it, and put it in a stewpan with salt, pepper, a little mace, and a quarter of a teaspoonful of ground allspice; put in water enough to keep it from sticking to the pan; cover it closely, and let it stew very slowly. When about half done add a quarter of a pound of butter, cut in pieces, and rolled in flour, and half a pint of claret wine. If the meat should not be seasoned enough, add more salt, pepper, or spice. Rabbit requires a great deal of seasoning, especially pepper. Serve it hot.

STATISTICS.

THE German Census was taken on the 1st of December, and some of the results, subject to further verification, have been published. It appears that since 1871 Berlin has increased 16.7 per cent., numbering 964,765 inhabitants; Hamburg State has 386,850, an increase of 13.23 per cent.; Breslau, 237,398, an increase of 15 per cent.; Leipzig, 126,412, or 13 per cent.; Hanover, 126,000, or 2.7 per cent.; Königsberg, 119,127, or nearly 10 per cent.; Dresden, 106,878, or 19 per cent.; Frankfurt, 103,231, or 13 per cent.; Stuttgart, 107,555, or 17.4 per cent.; and Strasburg, 94,257, an increase of 8.728.

THE SUEZ CANAL SHARES.—The total expenses, excluding the 10,000,000 of interest on the shares at 5 per cent. are 17,800,000. On M. de Lessep's own showing, the estimated expenses for the year 1876 do not exceed those of the year immediately following the opening of the canal, but are rather less. The fact that this is so, while the repairs that are being carried out are on a larger scale than at the first, ought to allay the apprehensions of unfriendly critics, unless in the case of those in whom the wish is father to the thought. By-and-bye those concerned in the canal may hope for a larger proportion of profits than they have yet received. All excess in annual receipts beyond 30,000,000, will fall to be divided in certain fixed proportions among the founders, the Egyptian Government, and the shareholders, who have therefore the prospect of receiving more than the 4 per cent. now paid. This prospect ought to encourage English investors to buy the shares, by doing which they will also be strengthening the national interest in the canal.

MISCELLANEOUS.

It is rumored that a memorandum will shortly be issued by the authorities which will decide for the future the question of precedence between the navy and army.

THE Admiralty having decided upon the construction of two despatch vessels to be made entirely of steel, the order for the plates and bars for the same has been given to the Lander's Siemens Steel Company, of Swansea, who undertake to supply a very mild steel of high quality.

CALIFORNIA grapes have been made into raisins with great success, the fruit being good, and the process being simple, the bunches being simply cut from the vine, and laid in the sun to dry for five days. The manufacture is also a very profitable investment, as while for wine-making the grapes are only worth 5s a ton, as raisins they will fetch about nine cents a pound wholesale, being at the rate of 504 per ton.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

JUSTICE.—Pay no attention to her and she will regret her conduct. This is the best course to adopt.

MR. BOFFIN.—The book you mention can be obtained from any respectable bookseller.

HYPERBOLICAL.—Your writing needs much improvement. The poetry we decline with thanks, not being up to our standard.

E. F. will do well to advertise in one or more of the daily papers, with a description of the missing person; also to apply at the Enlistment Department, War Office, Whitehall, London.

EDGAR HAVES.—No master can detain any apprentice after he is twenty-one years of age, he having entered into the contract as a minor, it cannot therefore be binding upon him at his maturity. But the master can refuse to surrender the indenture, or certify to the apprentice having completed his term.

B.—No one thought of alluding to you in any manner. You must be mistaken. Who would want to harm so quiet a man as yourself? No one who possesses any feeling. Give the subject no further consideration, nor let it trouble you in the least. We know you were not alluded to.

K. L. and REGARD.—We are glad to acknowledge the receipt of very kind wishes of "Regard" and many others of our numerous readers, and glad we have been successful in arranging for the publication of the LONDON READER on every Saturday morning, and request that all our patrons will apply for it on the Saturday, as we are anxious that all who do so shall be supplied.

SEMPER.—Don't marry until you are thirty, and not then unless you feel you could support a wife in all the style and luxuries which a woman requires now-a-days. Remember girls wait waiting on as wives, and but few are willing to do their share of work. You are better off as you are a hundred times than with a wife unless you have money to gratify all of her whims.

DAISY D. H.—Geographies and old authorities fail to give the name of the isthmus which connects Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. It is about fourteen miles long and seven miles wide. The Isthmus of Suez is a little over one hundred miles long and twenty-five miles wide. We do not know the number of isthmuses in the world, as they are not mentioned in any work which we have examined. Panama and Suez are the two principal ones.

CHRISTIAN.—There are about 5,000,000 Jews on the face of the globe. Of these there are said to be only 46,000 in France. In all America there are but 120,000. On the other hand, in miserable and trodden-down Poland the Jews are to be found in greatest number, one out of every seven of the inhabitants being a Hebrew. There are scarcely any Jews in Spain, and they are almost as rare in Belgium. In Sweden there are comparatively few, but they abound in Hamburg, Austria and Roumania in the proportion of one to every twenty-four inhabitants. Ireland has scarcely 300, Norway only 25.

LODGER.—Never was there a coffee machine more simple and certain than the ordinary French percolator, which is, in fact, two coffee-pots in one—the upper one for infusion, the lower one for the reception of the filtered liquid. He must be a great blunderer who cannot get a good cup of coffee out of such an instrument. Two conditions are necessary to make it good. One is to use plenty of coffee, and the other is to make the infusion rapid. There are people, penny wise and pound foolish, who think to make a saving in coffee by using a small quantity and by infusing it long. It is a great mistake. They lose the more delicate aroma, the taste is bitter, and the worst qualities of the coffee are brought out. On the other hand, to time the infusion requires a little management.

A PRACTICAL MAN.—The celebrated Bath bricks, which are known in almost every commercial market, and which housekeepers will recognise by the familiar name of "brickdust," are manufactured from the deposits of the river Parrett, Bridgewater, Somerset. Millions of them are made annually, and a large body of operatives are employed in the industry, in some cases whole families of both sexes and almost all ages working at one moulding. This deposit is not found anywhere in the world besides, so that Bridgewater has to furnish the whole world with the article, which for certain purposes has long been deemed indispensable. It is a remarkable fact that these Bath bricks are just as well known in China as in England; they are well known in India, and, indeed, all over the world.

A. N. C.—In the Royal Navy there are three kinds of admirals—of the red, of the white and of the blue; so called from the colour of their flags, whence they have all the general title of flag officers. There are further

three grades in each of these classes—admirals who bear their flag at the main-top-gallant masthead; vice-admirals at the fore-top-gallant masthead, and rear-admirals at the mizen-top-gallant masthead. The title of Admiral of the fleet is merely an honorary distinction. A full admiral ranks with a general, and one who is actually the commander-in-chief of a fleet with a field-marshal in the army; a vice-admiral ranks with a lieutenant-general, and a rear-admiral with a major-general in the army. The rates on full sea pay of admirals are—admiral of the fleet £6,000 per day, vice admiral £4,000, and rear-admiral £3,000. An admiral commanding-in-chief receives £3,000 per day additional when his flag is flying within the limits of his station.

D. says "I am a young man of fine appearance and cultivated manners; have received a college education, and I am well off, (have an interest in a railway. Now, my trouble is this: There is a widow in the City, a few years my senior, to whom I am engaged; but I do not love her. Her husband has not been dead a year, yet she is very gay. The widow's husband's life was insured for quite a sum, and she owns a fine residence. One great trouble is, she has two small children. She is very devoted to me. Nearly every Sabbath we walk to the cemetery and carry flowers to her husband's grave. Now, I am in love with a handsome young lady, but she is poor. Which would you advise me to marry?"

"How can I tell which one to choose, Is what I often sit and muse, They're both as fair as fair can be, And, blessed fate, they both love me."

Please do not throw this in the waste-basket, as I am very anxious awaiting your answer. Truth is said to be found at the bottom of a well—not an oil-well. You are engaged to a widow, whom you do not like, and in love with another lady. We doubt that. Men of your class are rarely in love, except with themselves. Our advice to you is not to marry for a year. This will be decent respect for the deceased gentleman; and we really hope by that time the widow will have found you out, and the poor girl have found for herself an honest husband. But by all means keep to the graceful custom of carrying the flowers to the cemetery on Sundays. It is extremely touching and so sweetly sincere with you both.

PLEASANT WEATHER.

The day is dark, the clouds hang low
Nor show a silver lining,
And as the sunbeams blow,
All nature seems repining.

I wrap my cloak about my form,
And set my feet securely,
Predicting that the coming storm
Will make sad havoc surely.

When, as I walk along the street,
As gloomy as the weather,
A little maid I chance to meet,
And we keep step together.

With her beside me, it appears
As if the sun shone clearly;
And 'tis my heart alone that fears
Her say, "I love you dearly!"

The sky may change from blue to gray,
And rudely blow the breeze,
But love can always make the day
As sunny as it pleases.

So all along the busy street
We two keep step together,
And, thus united, fall to meet
With night but pleasant weather. J. P.

ANNE M., twenty-two, medium height, blue eyes, brown hair, affectionate and fond of home, would like to correspond with a respectable young man, a tradesman preferred.

T. A. G. and T. A., of Her Majesty's A. H. Corps, wish to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony; they must be good looking and thoroughly accomplished, money no object. T. A. G. is 5ft. 8in., light brown hair, blue eyes, and considered good looking. T. A. is 5ft. 7in., dark hair and is considered very handsome.

BESSIE wishes to correspond with a gentleman with a view to matrimony; all she requires is a loving and affectionate husband and she will make a loving and dutiful wife.

FRED W., nineteen, 5ft. 11in., blue eyes, dark hair, holding a situation connected with the shipping trade, would like to correspond with a good and amiable young lady; respondent must be about the same age, medium height, dark hair, pleasant and domesticated.

M. J. L., a Jewish gentleman, twenty-three, engaged in a wholesale business, would like to correspond with a young Jewish lady from eighteen to twenty with a view to an early marriage. Respondent must be fair, good looking, well educated and possessed of some money.

LOVING LILY, an only child, medium height, fair hair, dark eyes, fond of home and music, has a loving disposition and good figure, is in a good position and will have 500*l.* at her marriage, wishes to correspond with a gentleman of superior education who wishes for a wife with a small fortune.

MAY, LILY and ETHEL, three friends, would like to correspond with three young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. May is twenty, 5ft. 4in., golden hair, blue eyes. Lily has dark brown hair, medium height, gray eyes. Ethel is seventeen, medium height, a brunette, curling hair and very fine eyes; respondents must be handsome, intelligent, and have a good income.

POINT and PAMEL, two sergeants in the army, wish to correspond with two young ladies about twenty, of loving dispositions. Point is twenty-six, tall, dark hair and eyes. PAMEL is twenty-two, tall, rather dark; both of loving dispositions.

BRATIA-SHIRT JACK, 5ft. 8in., gray eyes, light hair, considered good looking, wishes to correspond with a fair young lady.

BEESING TOM and FURLING GEORGE, messmates in the

Royal Navy, both holding good positions, one as assistant boatswain's mate and the other senior bugler, would like to correspond with two young ladies about eighteen, must be good looking and fond of home. George is tall, medium height, and considered handsome. Tom is fair, medium height, with blue eyes and curly hair; both are fond of children.

SNOWDROP and MINNIE would like to correspond with two gentlemen friends in good position. Snowdrop is eighteen, tall, dark hair and eyes, good tempered and of good family. Minnie is seventeen, of a lively disposition, blue eyes and fair hair, fond of music and singing, and hopes to make a good little wife to a fond and loving husband.

ROYAL FURNEL HARRY, medium height, light hair, blue eyes, light complexion, would like to correspond with a thoroughly domesticated young lady about twenty-four.

TOM H., twenty, medium height, wishes to correspond with a young lady about seventeen with a view to matrimony.

P. F., a seaman in the Royal Navy, 5ft. 7in., fond of music and children, and considered very good looking, would like to correspond with a young lady from seventeen to nineteen, who must be loving and fond of home and children, with a view to matrimony; a milliner preferred.

FRANK, a respectable young man, with good prospects, nineteen, tall, and considered good looking, wishes to correspond with a young lady about seventeen with a view to matrimony; respondent must be thoroughly domesticated.

ANNETTE, nineteen, fair complexion, dark brown hair, gray eyes, medium height, lively disposition and considered pretty by all her friends, wishes to correspond with a dark young gentleman about twenty-three; a clerk preferred.

MARTIE, nineteen, medium height, fair complexion, of a loving disposition, wishes to correspond with a tall, dark gentleman who is fond of home, with a view to matrimony.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

CORDELLA is responded to by—**R. J. S.**, a sergeant in the Royal Marines.

BASINUS by—**M. W.**, a sergeant in the Royal Marines.

EMMA by—**H. Y.**, holds a very responsible position as salesman in a warehouse, moderately good looking, rather tall, brown hair and blue eyes, good singer and musician, and very fond of home.

LIVELY EMMA and DOR by—**John and William**. John is a seaman gunner in the Royal Navy and William is ship's corporal. Both are rather above middle height, good looking, and fond of home and its comforts, and would make themselves homely with suitable companions; by—**George and Fred**, two friends. George is twenty-two, tall, good looking, good connections, and would prefer Dor. Fred is twenty-three, tall, good looking, good connections, and would prefer Emma; by—**Sydney and Harry**, brothers, respectively connected and considered very handsome. Sydney is nineteen, rather tall, very dark, and prefers Lively Emma. Harry is eighteen, tall, and prefers Dor.

DOR by—**Robert**, tall, gray eyes, dark eyes, well connected, and fond of home and music.

NOBODY'S DARLING by—**An English Gentleman**, considered good looking and has 500*l.*

MAGGIE by—**An English Gentleman**, considered good looking and has 500*l.*

ALFRED, eighteen, medium height, light hair and blue eyes, fair complexion, wishes to correspond with an affectionate and domesticated young lady about nineteen, with a view to matrimony.

CELESTINE, seventeen, good tempered, and thoroughly domesticated, wishes to correspond with a respectable young man who is fond of home, with a view to matrimony; respondent must be amiable and have a little money.

B. F., twenty, tall, loving disposition, thoroughly domesticated, wishes to correspond with a respectable young man.

CHRISTINE, a brunette, seventeen, tall, dark hair and eyes, wishes to correspond with a young man about twenty-six; respondent must be tall and have a loving disposition.

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